

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND POLICY



**ASSESSMENT OF CORRUPTION ON TITLE DEEDS REGISTRATION AND
TRANSFER SERVICES OF SEBETA TOWN ADMINISTRATION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma and all sources of material used for this thesis have been dully acknowledged.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	5
1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	6
1.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS	7
1.6 ASSUMPTIONS	8
1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS	8
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE.....	10
2.1 INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL LITRATURE	10
2.2 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY	15
2.3 COMPARATIVE FINDINGS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES	17
2.4 LAND SECTOR AND CORRUPTION IN ETHIOPIA	18
2.5 OVERVIEW OF CORRUPTION IN OROMIA REGION	19
CHAPTER THREE	21
3.1 METHODOLOGY	21
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH	21
3.3 SAMPLE POPULATION.....	22
3.4 DATA COLLECTION	23
3.5 DATA ANALYSIS.....	24
CHAPTER FOUR.....	25
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	25
4.0 INTRODUCTION	25
4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	25
4.2 PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION	28
4.3 CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY	30
4.4 MEASURES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION	37

CHAPTER FIVE	41
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	41
5.1 SUMMARY	41
5.1.1 FINDINGS ON PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION	41
5.1.2 CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY	42
5.1.3 MEASURES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION	43
5.2 RECOMMENDATION	45
REFERENCES:	49
APPENDIX.....	54

List of Figures	Page
Figure 1.1 Political transition and corruption	7
Figure 4.1 Gender and Age of Respondents	25
Figure 4.2- Educational Status of Respondents	26
Figure 4.3- Respondents by Their Respective Addresses	27
Figure 4.4- Occupational profile of respondents	28

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASTU	Adama Science and Technology University
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
EDF	Ethiopian Defense Forces
FEACC	Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
GCB	Global Corruption Barometer
OEACC	Oromia Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
ONRS	Oromia National Regional State
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TI	Transparency International
WB	World Bank

ABSTRACT

Corruption is a phenomenon with secretive nature making it difficult to research about. Land administration is one of the main economic sectors prone to higher level of corruption. The overall goal of this research was to identify the link between corruption in land title deeds registration and transfer processes and its bearing on service delivery at Sebeta town administration. In specific terms, this research was conducted with the following three aims. The first aim was understanding prevalence of corruption in land title deeds registration and transfer services of Sebeta municipality. The second aim was understanding whether service delivery was negatively impacted due to high prevalence of corruption and the last aim was consolidating possible measures stated by service seekers and officials as effective ways to prevent corruption. In this research, over eighty service seekers sampled out of community members waiting for their cases being processed at Sebeta municipality premises were interviewed. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique so as to identify respondents who were at the premises with the purpose of getting their property registered or transferred. From government office, officers at OEACC, Justice office, head of public service and land administration reform desk team leader were interviewed. Findings of this research indicates that majority of service seeker respondents perceive that Sebeta land administration is plagued with corruption which does not show any sign of decreasing even under the current regime which promised swiping reforms. Respondents also consider that service delivery was deteriorated due to systematic corruption engrained in the daily dealings of officers at the land administration. Involvement of middlemen in getting cases processed at the office was named one of the most worrying hinderances put on the way of other service seekers. Officers indicated that grand corruption has ceased since the reform; but ordinary citizens refute the claim, saying that local level has not seen significant reform or hope of it coming. In conclusion, there is a strong tendency to consider corruption as a normal routine by the wider public in their daily discourse. Added to this service delivery is undertaken through network of middlemen who use up majority of office hours of officers responsible for serving the public equally. In recommendation, there should be a scheme to strengthen public awareness on negative impact of corruption on local development and service delivery. Local population should play its part in combatting corruption by having sufficient access to information in relation to administration of their local affairs including management of land resources owned collectively.

Key Words: *Corruption, Land Administration, Title deeds*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Land issues have been rising up the agenda of policy makers due to rapid urbanization and high food prices. Yet, land administration is one of the most corrupt government activities. Corruption in land administration is a major problem in many developing countries. In terms of small-scale petty corruption, an international survey found that over one in five people reported having paid a bribe when dealing with land services, placing land as the third most corrupt sector (Transparency International: 2010-2011). Development aspirations of countries are highly associated with the level of efficiency in which those countries manage their productive resources including land. Land is one of the most demanded resources as all economic activities are based on it. Societies which have created internal stability and a functioning market economy recognize the need for effective systems for registering private land rights and for inexpensive system of land transfer. The privatization of land and the registration of tenure whether free hold, enable people to improve their land and property so maximizing its value and use (UNECE, 2007).

Sebeta is one of Oromia towns surrounding Addis Ababa. For an unfamiliar passerby, Sebeta may seem a small town with few investments and low economic activity. However, municipality of this town manages important residential and business areas such as Furi, an area adjacent to Jemo communal residence premises, Walatte near Kara Kore, and residential villages adjacent to Alem bank neighborhoods of Addis Ababa. Due to proximity to Mercato, the bustling business hub of Addis, the above areas of Sebeta town are highly demanded by traders for residence and small business purposes.

In a closer look, one would observe that sebeta is involved in very high level of transactions related to land such as title deeds transfers, legalizing illegal buildings, transferring ownership to lease and above all, through allocating housing plots to organized housing associations who fulfilled the requirements set for accessing land for those purposes. In recent years, one can also observe concentration of small-scale manufacturing industries clustered in the administrative boundary of the town. Primary sources of the land which is rendered to be allocated by the municipality for the above purposes is recategorized farm lands by paying farmers nominal amounts as compensations and letting them own a few plots for housing for their families. The

first interface of corruption and rent seeking in municipality service delivery probably starts to set in from the time a farm land is considered for a sort of municipal activity such as housing and handing over to those who want to set up factories or other establishments.

Relate to this, trends show that the demand for housing in the area has surpassed capacity of the town administration to supply housing plots to those who are looking for them. Due to this, most of new housing structures are built illegally through a practice of ‘Chereka Bet’. This is a practice of building squatter settlements during the night under the lunar light so that law enforcement officers would not confiscate the materials used for building those houses and evading detention. Those who managed to build such squatters and survived demolition for a year or so are considered lucky. Then they start to pay annual nominal tax for owning a house on that land. The process of owning a squatter house and surviving demolition and attempting to get an official title deed for such a house is another route by which corruption and rent seeking starts in the bureaucratic structure.

Recent literature on corruption trends in Ethiopia indicate that the country is being under a significant challenge of rampant corruption. According to the 2010/2011 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), 50% of respondents reported having paid a bribe to land services (Transparency International, 2011a). According to the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC), the institutionalization of informal fees is seen to have become so commonplace in the land sector that the FEACC states it was nearly impossible to get a plot of land without bribing city administration officials. World Bank affirms this claim by stating that rules for access to land are not clear and some have better access than others, largely due to relationships or payment of bribes (World Bank, 2012a). Related to this, Transparency International’s 2013 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), indicated that a significant proportion of respondents (43%) think that corruption levels in Ethiopia have increased in the years preceding the survey (Transparency International, 2013b). Corruption is perceived to be a serious problem in Ethiopia. A household survey commissioned by FEACC indicated that customs services was the most corrupt sector, followed by land administration. In the case of customs, those who are exposed to corruption have high capacity to pay and transfer their costs to others through overpricing their commodities. When it comes to land related corruption, it affects all level of the population as land is need for all economic activities. However, corruption in land

sector affects the poor so disproportionately as corruption is regressive in its nature. The country was ranked 111th out of 177 countries in Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the four years leading to the higher-level political reforms of 2018 in Ethiopia, there were widespread disruptive rallies and confrontations between citizens and security forces costing thousands of lives and destruction of assets. Among the widely raised demands of the rallies was quest for good governance in the lower level of the bureaucratic structure. Citizens were tired of the level of corruption in the local governance and poor service delivery. The other main triggers of Oromia wide rallies were the 2015 public announcement of the Addis Ababa and surrounding towns integrated masterplan. This masterplan was seen by the protesting public as a grand scheme of land grab aimed at incorporating districts surrounding Addis to the administrative domain of the city. Continued discontent and crackdowns on those who took to the streets fueled further grievances. At the boiling point of the matter, locals in some corners of Oromia resorted to demolishing and burning some government outposts such as kebele offices and homes of local officers implicated in mishandling administrative matters of the localities. It was this time that team Lemma came to the attention of the public, promising a sweeping reform and doing away with visible shortfalls of good governance in the lower structure of the ruling group. At the outset, public speeches made by these charismatic leaders managed to capture attention of the wider public and hope of all rounded reform was high.

However, nearly a year since the reformists came to power, little change is observed in the lower structure and local service delivery does not seem to change in the direction sought by the reformists. On the contrary, there are observable exacerbation of illegal land grabbing in the past few months. On its May 23, 2019 edition, Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) quoted mayor of Addis Ababa (Finfinne) as saying ‘an organized land grabbing and construction of illegal houses are highly increasing in the city, especially in Bole, Yeka, Kolfe, Nefas Silk and Akaki Kaliti sub-cities. The key actors in these illegal activities are investors, government officials, and brokers, including groups who have their own political agendas’. Since there was no clearly demarcated boundary lines between Finfinne and surrounding Oromia towns, there were similar

incidences of land grabs as those claimed to have happened in Finfinne. Some citizens who are looking for services related to property ownership and transfer are facing prolonged delays as was usual in the old days. Corrupt dealings and bribery are not out of horizon. This implies that lack of good governance, corruption and bribery is ongoing and lower level cadre of the ruling party are not aligned with the vision of those at the helm. It then turns out that reform is yet to come down to the lower level and local service delivery remains of poor standard.

There is no recent research in to how the higher-level political reform has resulted in efficiency gains in local service delivery and good governance including minimization of corruption. Since there is no detailed research in how corruption is currently affecting local service delivery related to land administration, administrative officers and officers linked to authorizing and managing land certification and transfer services are collectively blamed as culprits. Being collectively labeled as rent seekers could further push municipality officials to indulge in corruption since they know that their name and reputation is already tarnished. Service quality will continue to diminish in the worst case that majority of municipality staffs become rent seekers. Service seekers who are not able and willing to pay informal facilitation fees will face challenges of failing to get their cases through the bureaucratic hierarchy. On the other hand, service seekers who are able and willing to pay those informal fees would get their cases through the structure swiftly. Those whose cases went through smoothly will further be motivated to utilize the bureaucratic structure to their maximum advantage by further corrupting the administrative officers responsible for serving the public equally. The problems then continue to spiral out of control of those who claim to be responsible for administrative matters including land issues which are too prone to mismanagement.

This paper would fill in this gap of research by analyzing recent trends in corruption in local service delivery of Sebata municipality, focusing specifically on land title deeds registration and deeds transfer processes.

1.2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Corruption, given its secret nature is a phenomenon that is easy to sense yet hard to capture. It is a constant challenge for researchers, motivating them to develop scientific methods in approaching this sensitive issue. In line with this, my study will approach the subject matter by designing and presenting the following questions to the sample population.

Questions in their order were as follows:

- 1> What is the extent of corruption prevalence in land title deeds registration and transfer services of Sebeta land administration office?
- 2> How is corruption negatively impacting service delivery in Sebeta land administration office?
- 3> What possible measures can reduce corruption in land administration office of Sebeta Municipality?

The above questions will then be linked to purpose of the study listed in section below. Accordingly, questionnaires designed to address the above general study areas were presented to sample population.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The prime purpose of this study is to analyze impact of corruption on land title registration and transfer services of Sebeta municipality and to bring to light the real problems service seekers have faced in accessing services of their choice at their time of convenience. To be more specific, the study was undertaken in order to:

1. Identify and understand the prevalence of corruption in land title deeds registration and land title deeds transfer functions of Sebeta municipality.
2. To evaluate consequences of corruption on land title deeds registration and transfer process of the town.
3. And finally, to suggest possible measures to reduce corruption in land title deeds registration and transfer process of the municipality.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is not debatable that Ethiopia is undergoing a process of political and economic transformation and is on the rout to democratization. Montinola and Jackman, (2002) argued that countries undergoing political and economic transition to be susceptible to higher level of corruption compared to both dictatorships and democracies. According to these researchers, this happens due to struggle over source of accumulation, distribution of access and buying legitimacy. In dictatorships, corruption is relatively low due to presence of careful monitoring placed on officials using a system of mutual oversight and repression. On the other hand, democracies minimize corruption through participative decision making which involves participating local public in decisions affecting their neighborhoods. Presence of independent media and their access to information in democracies is another factor contributing to lower corruption as media is commonly involved in debunking corrupt practices. Other researchers found out that all the countries with the highest levels of corruption are developing or transition countries. Strikingly, many are governed, or have recently been governed, by socialist governments. With few exceptions, the most corrupt countries have low income levels. (Svenson, 2005; Ugur & Dasgupta, 2011) Ethiopia obviously falls well in this category of low income and developing countries.

My study was conducted under this theoretical framework which states that corruption is likely to be high in the country as it is undergoing political transition. It follows that higher corruption is one of the hindering factors for effective local service delivery including title deeds registration and transfer services of municipalities.

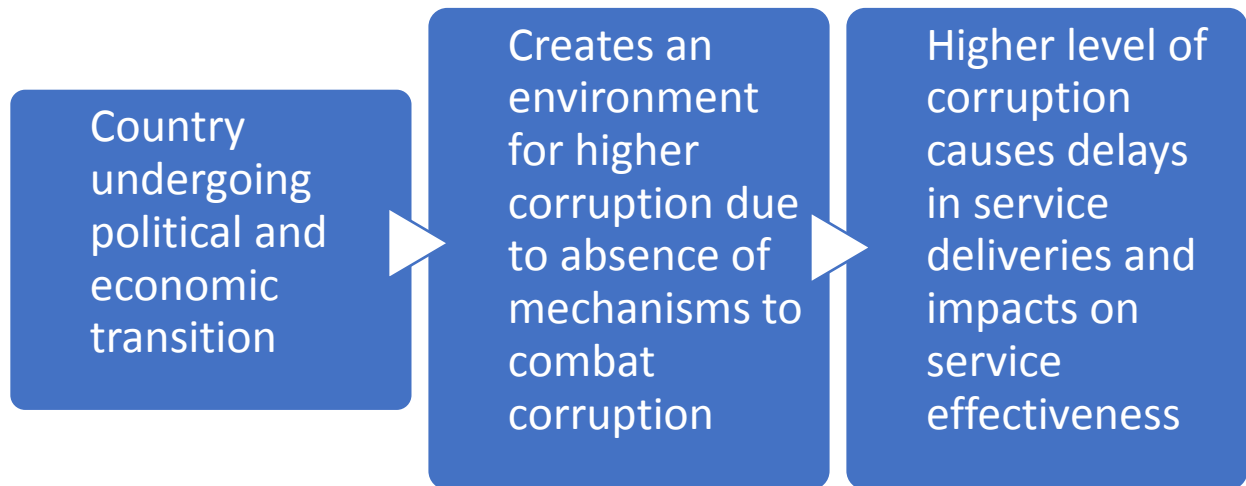


Figure 1.1 Political transition and corruption. A flow chart developed based on theories regarding corruption, political transition and economic status of countries. (Svenson, 2005; Ugur & Dasgupta, 2011)

1.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

CORRUPTION: There is no universally agreed definition for corruption. However, multiple sources agree that it involves misuse or abuse of public or private office for one's personal gains. It can also be defined as impairment of integrity, virtue and moral principles for private gains. (Okech,2016; Van der Molen, and Tuladhar, 2006; Gibbons, K. M.,1989) Corruption occurs in a number of ways and thus there are some related terms which will be defined below:

BRIBERY: Bribery is defined as an act of abuse of discretion in favor of third party in exchange of benefits given by the third party. Bribery involves the promise, offering or giving a benefit that improperly affects or intends to affect the actions or decisions of a public official (Okech,2016).

FRAUD: Fraud involves actions or behavior by a public official, other person or entity that fool others in to providing a benefit that would not normally accrue to the public official, other person or entity(Akongdit, A. A. O. 2013).

EXTORTION: Involves coercing a person or entity to provide a benefit to a public official, another person or entity in exchange for acting or failing to act in a particular manner(Akongdit, A. A. O. 2013).

FAVOURTISM: involves the provision of services or resources according to personal affiliations of a public official. Related to this is nepotism, which entails a public official ensuring that family members are appointed to public service positions or that family members are awarded contracts in a preferential way.

LAND ADMINISTRATION: the process of determining, recording and disseminating information about ownership, value and use of land.

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the current administrative setting of the town will remain intact for the foreseeable future. This enables the research to be conducted as planned and by contacting service seekers at the premises of the town municipality. As corruption is a hot topic under the current reform, assumption is made that respondents would be willing to speak out their mind in matters relevant to service quality and constraints they were facing including being extorted or being asked to get their issues handled through middlemen.

Another important assumption is that town administration other relevant government organs will be available to discuss some points related to service quality and challenges facing them in addressing the challenges. It is assumed that Sebata land administration is one of the most corruption ridden sectors in the municipality.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study was undertaken in the municipality of Sebeta. It gave a particular focus to land title deeds registration and transfer processes of the land administration department. According to a household survey by FEACC (2014), land sector is the second most corrupt sector preceded only by customs. Due to this there is a widespread public complaint about service delivery in this sector. This implies that thorough research in to causes and consequences of corruption and its

impact on service delivery needs to be undertaken by interviewing concerned stakeholders. However, as an academic study undertaken in an environment of constrained time and other resources, the scope of this study was limited to a portion of services rendered at the municipality. Thus, it cannot address the wider horizons of other services and goods offered by the municipality. It intends to assess the nexus between corruption and service delivery in the title deeds registration and transfer activities at the municipality.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will shed light on the level of corruption in land title deeds registration and transfer services of Sebeta municipality. This will help the municipality to develop policy aimed towards curbing corruption and mismanagement. It will also contribute in raising public awareness on issues of corruption in municipality services. Furthermore, it will add to literature on corruption in the field of public administration. New ideas obtained will enhance the study of public administration.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Corruption is defined as the exercise of official powers against public interest or the abuse of public office for private gains. It can also be defined as impairment of integrity, virtue and moral principles for private gains. (Okech,2016; Van der Molen, and Tuladhar, 2006; Gibbons, K. M.,1989) Corruption is not manifested in one single form. It typically takes at least four broad forms:

1. Petty, administrative, or bureaucratic corruption. Many corrupt acts are isolated transactions by individual public officials who abuse their office by demanding bribes and kickbacks, diverting public funds, or awarding favors in return for personal considerations. Such acts are often referred to as petty corruption, even though, in the aggregate, a substantial amount of public resources may be involved.
2. Grand corruption. The theft or misuse of vast amounts of public resources by state officials usually members of, or people associated with, the political or administrative elite constitutes grand corruption.
3. State or regulatory capture and influence peddling. State capture is the collusion by private actors with public officials or politicians for their mutual, private benefit. In this form of corruption, the private sector captures the state legislative, executive, and judicial apparatus for its own purposes. State capture coexists with the conventional (and opposite) view of corruption, in which public officials extort or otherwise exploit the private sector for private ends.
4. Patronage, paternalism, clientelism, and being a team player. Corruption occurs when officials use their official position to aid clients or colleagues with the same geographic, ethnic, or cultural origin so that they receive preferential treatment in their dealings with the public sector, including public sector employment (Shah, A., 2007).

Public sector corruption is a symptom of failed governance. Governance is defined as the norms, traditions, and institutions by which power and authority in a country are exercised (Shah 2007). Concern about corruption is as old as the history of government. In 350 BCE, Aristotle suggested in *The Politics*, “To protect the treasury from being defrauded, let all money be issued openly in front of the whole city, and let copies of the accounts be deposited in various wards.” Public sector corruption, as a symptom of failed governance, depends on a multitude of factors, such as the quality of public sector management, the nature of accountability relations between the government and citizens, the legal framework, and the degree to which public sector processes are accompanied by transparency and dissemination of information. Efforts to address corruption that fail to adequately account for these underlying drivers are unlikely to generate profound and sustainable results (Shah 2007).

Uslaner (2008) argues in his inequality thesis of corruption that corruption stems from high inequality and low trust in other people. High inequality leads to low trust and thus to high corruption, which in turn leads to more inequality. According to Rothstein(2011), You and Khagram (2005), corruption rests up on the foundation of unfairness. Perceptions of fair treatment lies at the heart of how people see grand corruption but only in relatively equal societies. In unequal societies, people do not expect fair treatment. They do not see corruption as acceptable, but as inevitable and beyond their control. Inequality demoralizes people and leads them to believe that they are not masters of their own fate. In societies with more equitable distributions of resources, people have greater expectations of fairness. They presume that unfair treatment is more than simply wrong. It represents a violation of the integrity of the governmental system. Inequality breeds corruption by: (1) leading ordinary citizens to see the system as stacked against them (Uslaner, 2002); (2) creating a sense of dependency of ordinary citizens and a sense of pessimism for the future, which in turn undermines the moral dictates of treating your neighbors honestly; and (3) distorting the key institutions of fairness in society, the courts, which ordinary citizens see as their protectors against evil-doers, especially those with more influence than they have (You and Khagram, 2005).

Corruption gives some people advantages that others do not have. Corruption transfers resources from the mass public to the elites – and generally from the poor to the rich (Tanzi, 1998). It acts as an extra tax on citizens, leaving less money for public

expenditures (Mauro, 1997). Corrupt governments have less money to spend on their own projects, pushing down the salaries of public employees. In turn, these lower level staffers will be more likely to extort funds from the public purse. Government employees in corrupt societies will thus spend more time lining their own pockets than serving the public. With less money in the public purse, key services will not be provided to those who need them most – the poor. The wealthy can find ways to obtain these services, but the poor may face demands for bribes they cannot afford – or even have to go without. (Uslaner, 2011)

moralists view corruption as an immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority. Moralists further observe that corrupt practice stems from the social norms that emphasize gift-giving and loyalty to family or clan, rather than the rule of law (Motional & Jackman, 2002). However, the functionalists differ from the moralists in their view of corruption. They say that corruption plays an important role in the operation of public sector establishments in such a way that it can boost the activities of the establishment thereby achieving the optimal efficiency (Khan, 1996). According to the publication of Johnston (Johnston, 1986), functionalists point to possible benefits of corruption, suggesting that it can speed up cumbersome procedures, buy political access for the excluded, and perhaps even produce de facto policies more effective than those emerging from legitimate channels.

In analyzing corruption, the theory involving the patron-client relationship is another popular theory. This theory analyses the corruption by exploring the nature of the political system and the role of administration in the emerging economies. This theory is predominantly used by economists and political scientists. According to this theory, the functionality of the public-sector establishments and related systems in place is eclipsed by the active informal networks developed by the relationship between the patron and the client. According to Khan, (1996), opportunities like jobs and resources are created by the patron (who can be a civil servant or politician) who expects the cooperation or support (for example, in the form of attendance at the meetings or votes). This paves the way for the creation of network comprising of patrons and their sub-patrons, clients, middlemen.

Systemic corruption is deep-rooted and pervasive which happens in a routine manner within and between the companies, public sector establishments, or individuals is called systemic corruption (Bank, W., 1997). Sporadic corruption, on the contrary, is the opposite of systemic corruption, where it occurs at times. Hence, there is no threat to economy or mechanism for control in this type of corruption. However, it might cripple the resources of the economy. Political corruption is manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision-makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth. Political corruption is characterized by voting irregularities, nepotism and cronyism, rule of a few, false political promises, paying journalists for favorable coverage of candidates and parties influencing voters by the distribution of money, food and drink, holding on to power against the will of the people (Kandukuri, 2015).

The quality of public sector institutions plays a critical role in access to and costs of the public services provided by a government to its citizens. Poor governance can affect public service delivery, both directly through higher price, and indirectly through lower quality or quantity available. When seeking a public service, some users may be discriminated against and pay more than what is officially set due to corruption. Many civil servants also illegally increase their compensation by providing services to interest groups that seek favors from the government. Political coalitions seeking ways to subvert the existing rules to redistribute national income and wealth in their favor can achieve their objectives by bribing civil servants whose job is to enforce state regulations and implement national development plans (Mbaku, J.M.,1996).

Low civil service pay has been widely accepted as an important contributing factor for corruption. Scholars point to a strong negative relationship between the level of civil service salaries and incidences of corruption. They contend that poorly paid civil servants are more vulnerable to venality and prone to illicit and unethical rent-seeking, as suggested by the fact that less-developed countries often top the list of most corrupt nations (Rijckeghem & Weder 2001 as cited in Gong T. & Wu A. M., 2012). Another underlying condition leading to corruption is feeling of relative deprivation. When individuals feel that they have been unjustly deprived of something perceived as an entitlement, they may develop negative self-feelings that may result in socially unacceptable behavior or foster the conditions underlying emergence of corruption

(Kulik, Fallon and Salimath, 2008 as cited in Gong T. & Wu A. M., 2012). Corruption can be categorized based on the economic status of the perpetrator. A corrupt act is need driven when grossly underpaid low-level officials accept bribes to pay for basic necessities, such as food or schooling for their children. Alternatively, corruption can be attributed to the insatiable greed of individuals for wealth (Gong T. & Wu A. M., 2012). Greed-driven corruption is more apparent in corruption cases of well-paid officials in higher level positions, as they do not count on bribery for survival. There are several contending theories in the study of corruption and its impact on public service delivery

According to Granovetter (2004), classical theories of corruption are dominated by economic treatments that focus on identifying structures of incentives that make corruption likely and assessing the impact of corruption on economic efficiency. The prominent theory in this perspective is the incentive theory or the principal-agent relationship. This theory states that there are a supervisory principal and an agent. The principal-agent approach finds its origins in theories of the firm, where the classic principal was the investor who had little confidence in the stockbroker. A principal-agent problem stems from two assumptions: principal and agent have diverging interests and that the agent has more information than the principal due to information asymmetry. Due to asymmetric information, the principal is unable to perfectly monitor the actions of the agent, and so the agent has some discretion to pursue their own interests. Moral hazard occurs when the interests of the principal and the agent are not aligned, and the agent pursues their own interests at the expense of the interests of the principal and hence the problem. (Marquette & Peiffer, 2015; Ross, 1973; Harris & Raviv, 1979). The application of principal-agent theory to the issue of corruption has taken for granted that principals have the will to serve the functions of monitoring and keeping agents to account.

In the terminology of principal-agent theory, transparency is one of the instruments available to a principal for controlling that its agent does not engage in shirking , i.e. activities which promote its own interests rather than the interests of the principal. Principal-agent models usually assume that the information asymmetry about agent's actions in its own advantage are prohibitively costly to eliminate completely, but that the more they are reduced the less room there will be for shirking and the more efficient will be the delegation (Miller 2005). In the principal-agent theory, the only party with an intention of getting corrupt is the agent while the principal is considered a victim of entrusting their matters to the agent. Added to this, the wider public is symbolized as

principals while the civil servants are considered agents who are prone to use access to information they have in pursuit of their personal gains at a cost to the public.

A contrasting theory considers corruption as a product of collective action. Collective action theory highlights the relevance to individuals' decisions of group dynamics, including trust in others and the (actual or perceived) behavior of others. When corruption is seen as 'normal', people may be less willing to abstain from corruption or to take the first step in implementing sanctions or reforms. (Marquette & Peiffer, 2015). This study holds the position that corruption in land administration in present day Ethiopia is as a result of collective action. Service seekers believe that their cases can easily be processed if they paid some facilitation money and officers responsible for availing those services tend to believe that their equals do accept such payments and they should not be left out. Land sector is also infested with systematically interconnected chain of brokers and middlemen whose task is to convince service seekers to pay informal facilitation fees so as to get their matters processed fast. That is why we are not witnessing any observable decrease in prevalence of corruption despite establishment of anti-corruption chapters in some of corruption prone sectors and locations.

2.2 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The following empirical findings are in line with the theoretical literature on public service provision and bad governance including corruption. The price and the level of public services provided are affected by the presence of corruption (Shleifer and Vishny, 1993) Added to this, more widespread corruption translates into higher prices and reduced offering of public services. At the same time, corruption can reduce government revenues, in turn eroding the quality of the services provided (Bears, Gloom and Janeba, 2000; as cited in Kaufmann, Montoriol-Garriga & Recanatini, 2008). Furthermore, corruption within the public sector can lead to lower investment in human capital (Ehrlich and Lui, 1999). This in turn may lead to a 'vicious circle' (Alesina, 1999), in which users choose not to use publicly provided services, further reducing a country's tax base and its ability to improve the quality of the services. Bribery can affect service delivery indirectly, by limiting the quantity of service available or reducing its quality. For basic services, poor governance affects low-income citizens more than high-income ones. Such regressive effect

appears to be significant especially for the most basic public services, like water, police, hospitals, schools, and municipal services. (Kaufmann, Montoriol-Garriga & Recanatini, 2008).

Corruption slows GDP growth (Abed and Davoodi 2000) and adversely affects capital accumulation (Lambsdorff 1999a, 1999b). It lowers the quality of education (Gupta, Davoodi, and Tiongson 2000); public infrastructure (Tanzi and Davoodi 1997); and health services (Tomaszewska and Shah 2000). It reduces the effectiveness of development aid and increases income inequality and poverty (Gupta, Davoodi, and Alonso-Terme 1998). Bribery, often the most visible manifestation of public sector corruption, harms the reputation of and erodes trust in the state. Poor governance and corruption make it more difficult for the poor and other disadvantaged groups, such as women and minorities, to obtain public services. Corruption may also affect macroeconomic stability, when, for example, the allocation of debt guarantees based on cronyism or fraud in financial institutions leads to a loss of confidence by savers, investors, and foreign exchange markets (Shah 2007).

One of the defining debates in the literature on the macroeconomic consequences of corruption has been whether it greases or sands the wheels of economic growth and development. Those in favor of the greasing hypothesis argue that corruption facilitates trade that would not have happened otherwise and promotes efficiency by allowing private sector agents to circumvent cumbersome regulations (Leff, 1964; Huntington, 1968). Numerous examples support this view, showing that in highly restrictive regulatory environments, corruption can enhance economic growth by stimulating entrepreneurship and efficiency (De Soto, 1990; Levy, 2007; Campos, 2010). Opponents of this view have constructed a solid theoretical rebuttal to these arguments by arguing that the greasing effect of corruption is only possible as a second-best option in a malfunctioning institutional setting. Thus, in order to properly evaluate the effects of corruption one has to recognize its endogeneity with respect to institutions (Aidt, 2009). Theoretical analyses and empirical evidence supporting this view abound, showing that corruption sands the wheels of growth. Rock and Bonnett (2004) argue that corruption reduces investment in most developing countries and particularly in small open economies.

Yet the body of empirical evidence on the economic consequences of corruption is still far from conclusive (Svensson, 2005; Aidt, 2009). For example, the literature continues to provide support to phenomena such as the so-called Asian paradox (a positive correlation between

corruption and growth in a number of fairly successful Asian economies, including China) even after accounting for the crucial intermediate effect of institutions that shape the more recent versions of the greasing the wheels hypothesis (Wedeman, 2002; Rock and Bonnett, 2004; Li and Wu, 2007; Vial and Hanoteau, 2010). The benefits from corruption are likely to accrue to the well-connected at the expense of the poor. Gupta, Davoodi and Alonso-Terme (1998) argued that corruption increases income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient. In a cross-section of 37 countries, a significant positive impact of corruption on inequality was found, while considering various other exogenous variables. When controlling for GDP per head, this impact remains significant at a 10 % level. It was concluded that a deterioration in a country's corruption index of 2.5 points on a scale of 0 to 10 is associated with the same increase in the Gini coefficient as a reduction in average secondary schooling of 2.3 years. As corruption increases the risks associated with making investments, e.g. by lowering the security of property rights, theory predicts that corruption will have a clear negative impact on the ratio of investment to GDP (Lambsdorff, J. G.,1999). While corruption is likely to lower GDP per head, poorer countries lack the resources to effectively fight corruption (Husted, 1999).

2.3 COMPARATIVE FINDINGS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Let us now look at country specific research findings related to land and corruption. A household study in Bangladesh (Tuladhar, A., 2007) under 3000 households shows that 97% households that bought land had to pay bribes for land registration, 85% of the households who transferred their land ownership had to pay bribes for land transfer, 85% households who collected land related documents had to pay bribes, 83% households had to pay bribes for land survey, and 40% households who received land had to pay bribes. India Corruption Study (TI, 2005b) states that 79% of those interacting with the Land Administration Department in the country had agreed that there is corruption in the department. Only 5% of respondents felt that there is no corruption in the department. Of those who paid bribes, more than 36% had paid money to department officials, whereas 33% had paid money to middlemen like document writers, property dealers etc. to get their work done. Work for which bribes were paid, concerned 39% property registration, 25% mutation/transfer, 12% land survey and 4% obtaining property documents.

In the case of Kenya, land corruption seems to be more of higher-level political corruption whereby the ruling leaders were implicated in unlawful allocation of lands to those favored. Ndungu report stated that both presidents Kenyatta and Moi made land grants to individuals without any consideration to the public interest, for political reasons, and without proper pursuit of legal procedures, whilst there was also extensive illegal allocation by the presidents of alienated land (viz, land which they did not have legal power to allocate). Various Commissioners of Lands had made direct grants of government land without any authority from the President. Forged letters and documents were used to allocate land in numerous instances, with many records at the Ministry of Lands and Settlements having been deliberately destroyed. (Southall, R., 2005)

2.4 LAND SECTOR AND CORRUPTION IN ETHIOPIA

When it comes to the land sector, some studies conclude that land grabbing activities originate from weakly protected land titles emerging from weak institutional frameworks (Borras et al., 2011; Cotula et al, 2009; Deininger et al., 2011; Mehlum et al., 2006). Over the last decade, there were widespread outcry in Ethiopia concerning land grabbing, both in cities, towns and in rural areas. Inner city poor from Addis Ababa were forced to leave their residential areas. The pretext given in this case was that inner city old neighborhoods needed redevelopment. While redevelopment was welcome, the process lacked fairness as original residents were thrown away to places as far as Tulu Dimtu in the outskirts of Addis. According to Abebaw Abebe, dwellers whose land holdings are going to be expropriated are, if they are lucky, notified about the project and the day to leave their holding. Even sometimes the holders are forced to leave their holding without prior payment of compensation. Farmers residing in the outskirts of Addis were in their turn displaced due to housing development programs aimed at resettling urban poor uprooted from inner city areas such as Arat Kilo. In the process, those close to the regime in power were granted right to redevelop old city areas and nearby rural areas from where farmers were removed at nominal compensation. This is a land related corruption of a higher level in which policies were designed so as to benefit a certain group at expense of others.

A recent Oxfam report on land deals (Oya, C, 2013) concludes that investors actively target countries with weak governance in order to maximize profits and minimize red tape. Weak

governance might enable this because it helps investors to sidestep costly and time-consuming rules and regulations. Selling off land which has so far been used by the local population might leave the affected groups in despair but yield the urban elites gratifications from the investors (Kenney-Lazar, 2012; Lavers, 2012). These benefits might also come in the form of improvements in urban infrastructure, while likely producing little positive effects for rural areas where most land deals can be expected to take place. Even more likely, these land deals may produce negative effects for rural areas (e.g., environmental damage, economic losses). From the international investor's perspective, approaching corrupt government officials appears advantageous as well because bribing them might facilitate the acquisitions and help to realize a price level (and other attractive conditions) that could not be realized if markets worked efficiently. Hence, the researchers hypothesize that more corrupt governments facilitate land grabbing activities. (Bujko, M et al, 2016).

In Ethiopia, research has found that capture of assets by the elite and senior officials as one of the main forms of corruption. Elite capture is facilitated by a weak policy and legal framework; and poor systems to implement existing policies and laws. There are widespread Institutionalization of informal fees. According to Plummer. J., (2012), a FEACC investigation report on corruption in five sub cities in Addis Ababa concluded that it was “nearly impossible to a get a plot of land without bribing city administration officials.” Fraudulent actions of officials led them to allocate land to themselves in both urban and rural areas. Officials were willing to defraud or respond to bribes or nepotism so as to overlook virtually all specified restrictions and requirements. This is particularly the case in Addis Ababa, which has seriously undermined the enforcement of land use plans, lease conditions, and building and construction codes in urban areas. Finally, it is stated that issuance of forged land documents resulting from fraud, bribery, or nepotism has seriously eroded confidence in the land records system. (Plummer, J, 2012).

2.5 OVERVIEW OF CORRUPTION IN OROMIA REGION

In a joint study made by Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) and Oromia Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (OEACC) in 2017, it was found out that grabbing both rural and urban land illegally by preparing fake documents was named among some of the major recurrent corruption cases observed in the region. The following is taken from the findings of the study:

The second most frequently mentioned type of corruption in ONRS is related with land administration. Grabbing both rural and urban land illegally by preparing fake documents was a common practice in major cities and towns of the region. Most of the time, engineers in the municipality also intentionally give the same plot of land for two individuals under the pretext of “overlapping”. Then they search for best location and give it to one of the two in the form of replacement after they take bribe.

Added to this, land administration bureau, city administration/municipality, court, police, and regional procurement bodies were ranked as the five most corrupt government institutions in their respective order.

In the course of my literature review, I have never come across any specific research done in areas of corruption in land related services in Sebeta municipality. Towns surrounding Addis Ababa, including Sebeta are widely perceived by the public as epicenters of land grabbing, land related corruption and displays of poor service delivery when it comes to addressing housing needs of the residents. My study will thus strive to bridge the gap by contributing my findings to the available knowledge in the sector.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using mixed research design to assess corruption in land title deeds registration and transfer services of Sebeta town and its impact on service delivery. The design is mixed because I employed features of both qualitative and quantitative research designs so as to arrive at convincing findings. Responses to questionnaires was individual opinion of respondents which has qualitative attributes. However, closed ended questions in the form of quantitative method were used so as to categorize and measure responses which are of qualitative nature.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

The primary source of data on corruption in such a setting should be service seekers who line up at the gate of the municipality on daily basis. The service seekers are also the ones who have individual encounters with land management officers who demand informal payments or middlemen who facilitate such payments. Due to this, I utilized a survey questionnaire prepared having both closed ended and open-ended questions. Closed ended questions were framed in the form of Likert scale, which will gauge responses of sample population on scales which rate responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was focused on areas of prevalence of corruption as observed by respondents, impact of corruption on service delivery. According to Golden & Picci (2005), In terms of representative sampling, surveys among the general public may be better when researching on corruption prevalence. However, various respondents may have no experience with corruption. Their perception may not be very stable over time, since it is highly depending on how much attention corruption receives in the media. Meanwhile, using specific target groups as the source of corruption perception can yield maximum information about corruption although not necessarily honestly expressed. That was why my target group was people processing cases related to property title deeds transfer and registration.

Even though my plan is to utilize the above method, I also contacted officials at Sebeta land administration, Oromia Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission and Oromia justice bureaus and did interviews in the respective offices regarding reform, service delivery and corruption. I also

made attempt to access data on corruption and actions taken on perpetrators by Oromia anti-corruption office and Oromia Justice bureau which is mandated with prosecution of corruption crimes in the region. I also held a key informant interview with three people who faced significant problem due to corruption in the land administration office of Sebata town

3.3 SAMPLE POPULATION

In the case of Sebata town land administration office, there is a standing rule that each day a maximum of ten new cases are processed from Monday to Friday. Due to this, there is a huge crowd of people lining up at the gate as early as 6:30 AM on work days. My study focused on these service seekers during a certain working week of the month. Even if the daily service quota is for ten cases of land transfer or registration, there is higher number of people sitting around in the premises and wait for chances of being called in to get their cases processed. I estimate that some sixty service seekers are given appointments on the first day they show up to get their cases started. In this view some three hundred people go to the municipality each week. At a margin of error of 10% and confidence level of 95% the ideal sample size for my population of 300 will be 73 people. However, I decided to interview 80 service seekers lining up for getting their cases processed at the municipality during the week of my interview. Given that the estimated number of service seekers wanting to get title deeds registration and transfer over a week to amount to some 300 individuals, it is fair to take close to 1/3 of this population for the intended study and conclude the sample to be representative of the population.

Regarding sampling method, I will utilize convenience sampling. Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling) is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study. By focusing on people visiting land administration office, I screened potential respondents by asking them what cases they were processing at the municipality. This is justified, given that people visiting the municipality have varied cases which could be different from land title deeds registration or transfer issues. For example, there are people who go there to appeal issues related to border dispute or inconvenience related to neighborhood social affairs or infrastructure. By employing purposive sampling, I was able to access views and opinion of service seekers whose particular case is land registration or transfer. During my interview I asked people if they had

land related cases at the municipality. When their response was positive, I verified that it was either land title deeds registration or transfer and thus proceeded to ask for their willingness to be part of a study sample population. Some were weary or fearful of discussing corruption in the premises and wanted to avoid my discussion.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

As stated above, my data collection methodology includes both open ended and closed ended survey questionnaire which is administered to the service seekers observed at the premises of Sebeta Municipality. I also used structured interview in contacting officials at Oromia offices related to land administration, reform and corruption mitigation. I also had key informant interview with some few persons who considered sharing information they had as an important step in bringing transparency in land sector. The assertions/ statements discussed with respondents were classified in to three main areas where the first will focus on prevalence of corruption, the second part focused on impact of corruption on service delivery and the last part was designed to get ideas of respondents regarding combating corruption in the land sector. This section had open ended question which sought opinion of respondents on how corruption would be mitigated by involvement of service seekers.

Likert scale is a rating system used in questionnaires that is designed to measure people's attitudes, opinions, or perceptions. Subjects choose from a range of possible responses to a specific question or statement; responses typically include strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Often, the categories of response are coded numerically, in which case the numerical values must be defined for that specific study, such as 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, and so on. Collected data was synthesized, to give a meaningful analysis which can be presented through graphs, percentages and ratios. Regarding ensuring reliability and validity, correct rating on the scale was marked according to respondents' agreement or disagreements with those assertions. The only process required of respondents was willingness to listen to a series of assertions and indicating whether or not they agree or disagree, including the level of their disagreement or agreement. Their response to other open-ended questions was also summarized and presented in the data presentation section.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. The data gathered through questionnaires were coded, entered into computer and analyzed and presented in the form of charts, diagrams, and tables using SPSS Software. Descriptive statistics was used to report demographic data and summarize the response to all variables. To test the influence of corruption on land title deeds transfer and registrations services, correlation analysis was used. Frequency measures such as Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation was used in this phase. The results of the secondary data obtained from relevant offices and detailed interviews were integrated to the responses of service seekers through questionnaires analyzed accordingly. The analysis was made by integrating both data from interview, questionnaire and secondary sources at the same place rather than analyzing them separately to maintain topics coherences and help the readers get them on the same or consecutive pages.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will be presenting and analyzing data collected through different methodologies discussed in chapter three. The presentation will be done by categorizing data as back ground information and subject matter information as presented in the survey questionnaire.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The demographic characteristics of respondents which includes sex, age, marital status, educational status, address and current occupation are presented hereunder. Out of the total respondent s of the study, 58(72.5 %) were males and 22 (27.5%) were female. Even if the number of female service seekers observed at the premises of the municipality were roughly equal to those of the male counterparts, I found female target population less cooperative. Most of them are too suspicious of what to talk and whom to talk to. In regard to age distribution of respondents, 6 (7.5%) were in their twenties, 30 (37.5%) were in their thirties, 26 (32.5%) were in their forties, 10 (12.5%) were in their fifties, 6 (7.50%) were in their sixties and 2 (2.5%) were in their seventies. This age distribution conforms with the common expectation that people involved in transactions related to property being those who are economically active that people in their thirties and forties making for 70% of the sample population.

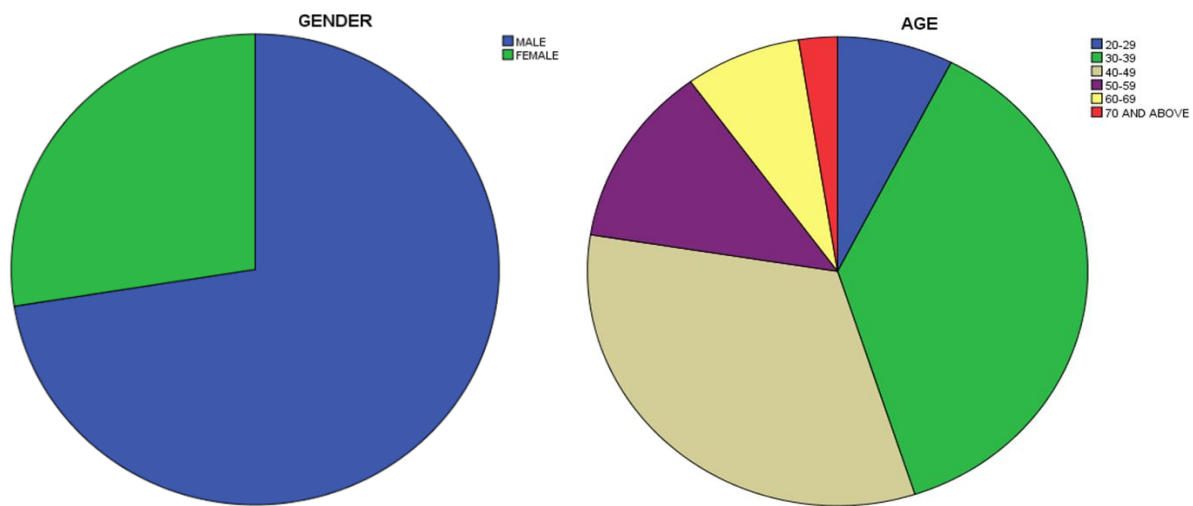


Figure 4.1 Gender and Age of Respondents

Regarding marital status of respondents, 8 (10%) were single, 70 (87.5%) were married and 2 (2.5%) were widowed. Educationwise, 1 (1.3%) person indicated that he attended basic education, 12(15%) were educated at primary school level, 28 (35%) had high school level education, 15 (18.8%) were diploma holders, 20 (25%) were first degree holders, and 4 (5%) were educated to masters degree level.

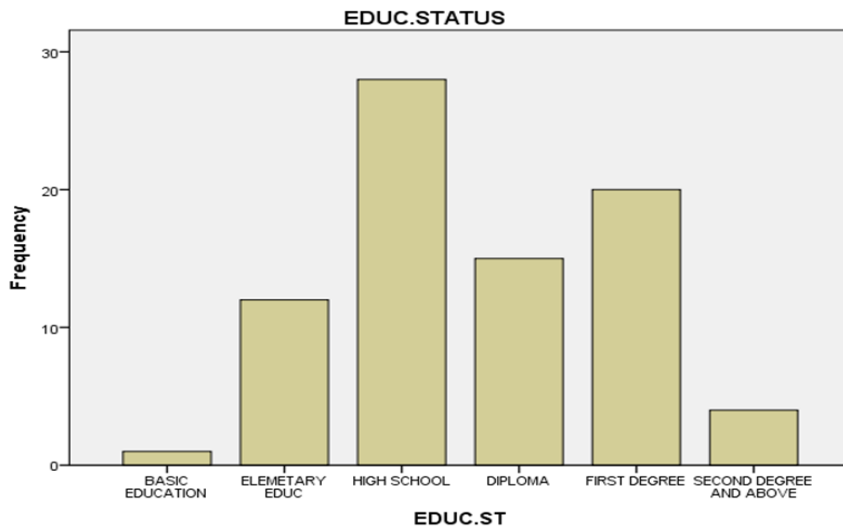


Figure 4.2- Educational Status of Respondents

When it comes to address of respondents, 58 (72.5%) of them claimed coming from different kebeles of Sebeta town. Their specific breakdown in to respective kebeles is presented in table below. Apart from Sebeta, 15(18.8%) came from Addis Ababa, and 7(8.8%) claimed coming from different zones of Oromia, Hosanna, and other countries. Higher numbers of respondents from kebeles 2, 3 and 4 implies that land related transactions are higher for kebeles adjacent to Addis Ababa. These Kebeles include Furi and Wolette areas which are closer to Addis than to Sebeta but are administratively under Sebeta municipality.

SN	Address	Frequency	Percent
1	Sebeta 01	8	10.0
2	Sebeta 02	15	18.8
3	Sebeta 03	10	12.5
4	Sebeta 04	10	12.5
5	Sebeta 06	2	2.5

6	Sebeta 07	6	7.5
7	Sebeta 08	7	8.8
8	Addis Ababa	15	18.8
9	Other Places	7	8.8
	Total	80	100.0

Figure 4.3 - Respondents by Their Respective Addresses

Regarding occupation of respondents, 35(43.8%) stated that they run private businesses, 7(8.8%) were government employees, followed by 6(7.5%) pensioners, 5 (6.3%) unemployed, 4(5%) housewives and over sixteen other occupations listed for the rest as found in the table below. Profile of respondents included diverse occupations including a practicing accountant, a bank manager, an EDF Soldier, and a medical doctor among others. In relation to occupation, it is worthwhile to note that Sebeta land attracts significant number of business community as indicated in occupational profiles of respondents.

SN	OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	ACCOUNTANT	1	1.3
2	BANK MANAGER	1	1.3
3	BANK OFFICER	1	1.3
4	CARPENTER	1	1.3
5	DRIVER	2	2.5
6	EDF SOLDIER	1	1.3
7	FARMER	3	3.8
8	GOV'T EMPLOYEE	7	8.8
9	HOME CARE(ARABIA)	1	1.3
10	HOUSEWIFE	4	5.0
11	LABOURER	1	1.3
12	MASSON	1	1.3
13	MEDICAL DOCTOR	1	1.3
14	NGO STAFF	3	3.8
15	PENSIONER	6	7.5
16	PHARMACIST	1	1.3
17	PRIVATE TRADING	35	43.8
18	RELIGIOUS LEADER	2	2.5

19	TEACHER	2	2.5
20	UNEMPLOYED	5	6.3
21	WATER RIG OPERATOR	1	1.3
	TOTAL	80	100.0

Figure 4.4 - Occupational profile of respondents

4.2 PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION

As a complex social phenomenon, corruption is perceived differently by different groups. Some consider it as an entrenched unethical behavior of public officials in delivering services while others consider it as an act of giving and receiving bribes. Others consider corruption as a forceful extraction of economic benefits from others who were supposed to access fair service in an equitable and transparent manner. Significant majority of respondents in the survey questionnaire strongly agreed 34(42.5%) or agreed 31(38.8%) on the assertion that corruption in all its forms was existing as one of the major problems in Sebeta municipality. On the other end, 13(16.3%) were neutral responding to the assertion while 2(2.5%) disagreed on the notion of existence of corruption. Some considered the question itself as a silly one stating the general perception that corruption is part of the daily dealings in the municipality. Those who were not comfortable discussing the topic from the very beginning tended to state that they were neutral on the assertion and those whom I later identified being middlemen tended to disagree on the notion of existence of corruption in Sebeta.

Asked if they knew someone or have heard of someone who paid bribes in the past so as to get his/ her case processed, 60(75%) of the respondents replied that they knew someone close to them who did this and managed to pass the bureaucratic hurdles, or they indicated having heard of such payments being made by others. On the other hand, 17(21.3%) replied that they did not know of or hear about someone who paid bribes in Sebeta land administration while 3(3.8%) indicated that they were not sure of having such information. One respondent stated the following:

There are a lot of such rumors. We know that almost all the office ladies you see here are tasked with facilitating that. There is a young man at the front desk here. When you get

in, he asks what your case is. Hoping that he might be helping, you tell him details of what you are here for. He then finds a reason to convince you that your case would better be handled on the sideline citing excuses such as other officers being occupied with other urgent matters or directives coming down to withhold services of the sort you are here for. I came here for processing a property title deeds transfer, and he mentioned that I would get delayed service unless he convinced others to help. I asked for his help and he stated that I pay ‘Three’. I asked what that three was. He said it was 30,000.00 Birr to be shared among officers whose hands would touch my documents until the process was final. I declined his offer and am coming here for over six months.

There are similar accounts from other who indicated that they had close relatives who paid bribes so as to get swift processing of their cases. One respondent indicated that he knew someone who paid bribes but whose case was kept on suspense due to transfers and reshuffling of staff in the department. Another person who claims to be a property developer indicated that he himself paid bribes to customs(finance) officers in the municipality so as to help him pay lower property taxes. A respondent told me that he lost his planning certificate. Knowing this he sought counsel of officers in the land administration department. They informed him that he has no option apart from paying them so that they prepare a duplicate for him. He paid them an amount he was not willing to say but was happy paying that and getting his document back in file. There were however some respondents who indicated that the amount requested was too high. These group of respondents avoided paying bribes not out of ethical considerations but due to economic limitations. Considering this, my argument that corruption is a collective action problem is sound as service seekers are willing to pay bribes and they also consider the payment fair as long as they accessed accelerated service. Both service seekers and providers are initiators of corruption when it comes to Sebeta land administration. This is symptom of corruption as a collective action problem.

Regarding media coverage related to corruption issues, a question was posed to respondents asking if they had heard or read media (both social media and conventional ones) reports covering corruption in Sebeta land administration. To this question, 21(26.3) indicated that they had previously heard or read such reports, 58(72.5%) replied that they did not access such media reports while 1(1.3%) said he was not sure of having such information. Some respondents

indicated that they pleaded to some of the local media establishments. They also confirmed that the media agencies were willing to come and interview both groups who were appealing for media attention and officials in the municipality. According to the respondents, the news aired was a very biased account of events which favored narratives presented by municipality officials leaving out voice of those who appealed for media coverage.

Others indicated that media establishments were frequently visiting the municipality before the reform. However, they also noted that no convincing investigative reports were aired as the reporters were muzzled with cheap softeners in case of minor corruption incidents and were granted land themselves in cases where the matter being investigated was amounting to grand corruption. In relation to social media posts, a respondent said he used social media to report malpractice, but his report did not get attention of those who were supposed to supervise land administration and Kebele leaders.

4.3 CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The first question posed to respondents in this category was whether they consider corruption increasing or decreasing since the reform. Responding to this question, most of the respondents were enthusiastic and were willing to share their ideas why they viewed the subject matter in a way they stated. Of the total sample population, 40(50%) said corruption is increasing even after the reform, 34(42.5%) argued that corruption is decreasing since the reform while 6(7.5%) stated that there was no observable change from times prior to reform.

The main reasoning of those who say corruption is increasing is that the much hyped about reform has not yet come down to the local level. Some argued that lower level cadre to be grabbing as much as possible before the reform comes and washes them off. Connected to this, others argued that old network established to channel benefits and resources unfairly as being still active and thus becoming a major obstacle for the reform to come to the local level. One respondent commented that there may be some elements in the local level who are working against the reform by deliberately delaying services to the residents, institutionalizing informal payments and causing general discontent on the higher leadership for failing to reach out to the local communities. A number of respondents also stated that those who did crimes including corruption crimes are not being punished but are given transfers and at times promotions to areas where they could access more resources.

On the other hand, respondents who claimed corruption as decreasing reasoned change to take time. Some said reform and good governance cannot be implemented overnight. They stated that there is an observable positive change mentioning examples such as encountering some welcoming, cooperative staff compared to those who were unwelcoming in the past. Those who claim corruption to be increasing are framing their reasoning based on what they have come through, while those who say there is slight improvement are framing their notion on a better hope of good days to come. Those who responded having no change observed reasoned that the same old guard to be at play.

The central issue to be explored through the next part of the questionnaire was whether respondents were asked to pay bribes by municipality staff at any position. Asked whether they had been asked to pay bribes to officers in land administration department at Sebeta, 33(41.3%) replied that they were asked bribes while attempting to get their cases processed, and 47(58.8) stated that they were not directly asked to pay bribes. Some respondents indicated that the officers knew whom to target for such illegal extraction of benefits. It is likely that business people who were giving priority to timely completion of their cases were the major targets while farmers, laborers and government employees who have lower economic capacity are ignored so that they follow their cases over longer periods. Added to this, it seems that those who claim inheritances passed down to them from their families and local indigenous residents are not directly asked to pay cash bribes while those who resettle to the town from other regions are targeted to a higher degree compared to the locals. However, locals who had excess land in their ownership are targeted for their land. One of the respondents, who claimed having worked for the government for over 37 years and who is currently a pensioner stated the following on how he was targeted for his land:

When I was young, my family had several hectares of farmland located in one of rural villages between Addis Ababa and Sebeta. I studied up to 12th grade and was employed by the government. It is now 13 years since I retired. During the last 15 years, there were massive land grabs in the village. Most of the villagers in my childhood locality have now left the place because it has turned to become one of the most demanded suburbs attracting traders and displacing farmers who are not fit to become laborer. Since I was able to defend my right to some extent, I managed to keep some 10, 000 M2 of land till

today. However, kebele cabinet members, city planning officers and land management officers ganged up against me demanding that I include their name or names they prefer as members of my family so as to get family allocations. (*When farmland is turned in to urban land, there is a practice that allows family members including under age children to get allocation of housing plots as a nominal compensation for family's lost right to farm the land*). I firmly resisted their demand and pushed to legalize my ownership title. It has now taken me 11 years since I applied to get title deeds for my house in which I am currently living. It is a very nice-looking house build in a nice view but since I have no legal document, I am not paying any cent as property tax. They are also harming the government by making me not to pay taxes.

Another person who also had land inherited from his parents narrated similar incidences of being asked to let kebele manager take ownership of one of plots allocated to his little kids. He was denied processing of documentation until he convinced his wife about this arrangement. His wife rejected this offer and their quarrels on this matter lead him to abandon his cherished family in anger and frustration. The respondent stated that the kebele manager had links all the way to the office of the mayor that no one can scape him if any inconvenience was created at any circumstances.

Even if there is no fairness in paying bribes, those who were asked to pay bribes stated that the amount demanded was unfairly high. A lady told me that she built a G+1 residential property while her construction permit was for an L Shaped villa. She recalled that this mismatch was observed by a planning officer who threatened her to either get her property demolished or pay him birr 50,000.00 so that the planning permission was revised for her. In this case, there seems a deliberate oversight. City planning officers were supposed to verify whether all construction was in progress according to correct categories of issued licenses and property owners were supposed to strictly follow planning licenses so as to avoid getting in trap for bribes. Those who stated not being asked to pay bribes indicated that corruption perpetrators had alternative ways of extracting such as delaying activities beyond limit so that service seekers resort to use intervention and support of middlemen who have strong bondage with officers in the municipality.

One of the main mechanisms used by municipality leaders and land administration officers is giving middlemen upper hand in getting things done in the office. There are dozens of middlemen who are hanging around the municipality, convincing service seekers to use their involvement in fast tracking complicated cases. Asked if they were approached by middlemen, 35(43.8%) of respondents indicated that they were approached by middlemen while 45(56.2%) stated that they were not approached by middlemen while attempting to get their cases processed. One lady replied the following:

‘why can middlemen (Delala) dare to talk to me? They see how I look, they know that I am poor. Their targets are those who come here in their fancy cars, those who are wearing nice clothes. If they come close, I fear that they may be attempting to steal my file number so that they produce fake duplicates on my plot.’

Confirming that middlemen target those who look well to do, a medical doctor indicated that she was approached by a middleman while she was parking her car near the municipality. She stated that she declined his offer and continued to follow it up herself. She was also appreciative of the speed at which her case was progressing so far.

Service seekers indicated a number of ways in which involvement of middlemen has negatively impacted service delivery in the municipality. Firstly, middle men always come to the office with tens of cases delegated to them. When such middlemen come and intrude in to the office the rest of those in lineup were told to come days later. Office hours are allocated to processing of dozens of cases sneaked in by middlemen while other people are waiting in queues. Secondly, respondents suspect that most of the cases handled by middlemen to be cases of questionable legality such as formalizing illegally grabbed plots for those in the corruption channel including illegal land dealers who work with their counterparts in the municipality.

According to a respondent, most of middlemen involved in land related deals have power to challenge policies and procedures so that they remain beneficiaries. Explaining this, he recounted a period when a progressive mayor was assigned at the town. This mayor was eager to reform the entire system that he ordered initiation of digitalization of all land related documentation so as to avoid duplication and land grabs. He also passed a directive banning all middlemen from entering premises of the municipality by encouraging service seekers to follow up their cases

themselves. However, this mayor did not stay long at the municipality due to rumors spread against him mainly by middlemen whom he banned and their network inside the municipality who were sharing benefits with middlemen. Currently, Documentation is archaic, and middlemen can roam the premise without any fear of being questioned. During this interview, I have seen a number of people who were told that their files were lost. It will take them months to get solution and they will probably use service of middlemen who can do everything under the sun, including producing replacement documents if their customers have the capacity to pay. In discussions I had with researchers at OEACC, the research officers stressed their awareness of middlemen's involvement in Sebeta land related deals as well as middlemen's capacity to dictate actions of officers at land administration there.

The next question discussed about length of time taken to complete a certain case at the municipality. Accordingly, 65(81.3%) considered that it takes too long to complete cases such as title deeds transfer or registration, 13(16.3%) stated that processing time for their cases was fair, and 2(2.5%) considered services they received as fast compared to prior periods. Those who complained about delays in services claimed that their cases were rolling from over 10 years to those who kept waiting for six months. Those who stated processing time to be fair indicated that they managed to complete most of the requirements in less than three months and are expecting to get their documentation in few days. I have noticed that majority of those who suffered prolonged lack of service are farmers who were seeking formal documentation for their remaining plots and original residences. They stated that frequent change of officers who were looking in to their cases and replacements with no hint on the cases made this group of service seekers to wait far too long in getting their ownership titles legalized.

Asked whether they were able to see relevant officers in office whenever they were visiting the municipality to get their cases processed, 57(71.3%) indicated that they were not able to see responsible officers at office most of the time, 10(12.5%) stated that presence of officers during working hours was fair, and 13(16.2%) indicated that they were able to see staff members they were supposed to get in touch so as to get their cases processed. Most of those who complain about lack of getting staff at office said that whenever they come to the municipality, they were told that the person they were to see was said to be at a field duty. Others complained about lengthy and repetitive meetings which consumed time of middle and higher-level officers who

were supposed to put last touches on documents. Others indicated that some of the staff to be less willing to take the motivation to serve the public. Some are coming but go to other sections and sit there talking about irrelevant issues thus killing time of service seekers. During discussion with research department team members at Oromia Ethics and Ant- Corruption Commission (OEACC), one officer made the following remark confirming complaint of respondents above.

Some employees working in the municipality, especially those working in sections related to land administration are working half day as land brokers. They come to office in the morning and work there to midday. At noon, they shut off their phones which are known in the office and activate others they use in land deals networks. They leave office and wander in the neighborhoods trying to find plots to work on. Most of the time when they are engaged in this type of activity, they claim that they were at field duty. This is what we know for some time now. Those who do this have no worries of being absent as they have consent of their supervisors who seem to share from outcomes of the other jobs of their subordinates. The most challenging thing in such cases is that it is difficult to spot whether the plot was grabbed illegally because all documentation is put in place properly. Since insiders are involved, they know what to put where, and the only possible way to debunk such a corruption is through tips (information) obtained from locals who know that the plot was being occupied illegally.

In a follow up to the above remark, I asked the team on how the office was collecting public complaint and tips. They told me that there was a department tasked with receiving public complaints. This department consisted of three officers but all of them left the office nearly a year ago. Since they left, no one replaced them that receiving public complaint has stopped. One of the major mandates of the commission was collection and investigation of complaints. After investigating the alleged corruption case, this department was mandated to handover the potentially chargeable cases to Oromia Justice Bureau corruption crimes prosecution department. In an interview made with Ato Hundara, Oromia Justice Bureau corruption related cases prosecution department team leader, I have confirmed that they are not currently receiving new cases to follow up on as the team tasked with referring such cases to this department is no more functioning. Strengthening the above reasoning, study made by ASTU and OEACC in 2017 narrates the following regarding inaccessibility of the commission and other related challenges.

Inaccessibility of the commission was also mentioned as major drawback in implementing the anti-corruption policies and strategies. The commission has only limited branches in few zones. To avoid potential challenges, some office heads also intentionally appoint weak and inactive ethics officers who do not have confidence and capacity to challenge top officials when they are involved in corrupt practices. [...] The work environment is also not convenient for some ethics officers. They do not have separate offices where individuals can come and report cases confidentially. Some office heads also consider the ethics officers as potential threat or as fault finders and they are reluctant to cooperate with them. Most often, the ethics officers do not have the courage to report corruption practices committed by the office heads to which they are accountable. Some compare reporting corruption cases committed by own office head with the act of cutting a big tree and allowing it to fall up on oneself. In short, although the government has designed various policy frameworks to fight corruption, the situation on the ground doesn't seem to be encouraging. (Page XV)

The last question in this category was asking respondents if they believed that corruption has impacted service delivery at Sebeta municipality negatively. Responding to this, 44(55%) agreed strongly to the assertion that corruption has negatively impacted service delivery, 24(30%) agreed to the same assertion, 10(12.5) stated their neutrality on the matter while 2(2.5%) disagreed to the assertion. The overall percentage of respondents who consider that corruption impacted service delivery at Sebeta municipality was 85%. This figure agrees(positively correlates) with the response given on prevalence of corruption in Sebeta land administration department. Several respondents reasoned that it was due to corruption that multitudes of people were gathering each day at the municipality, particularly seeking services related to property ownership transfer or registration.

4.4 MEASURES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

The last section of my questionnaire discussed possible measures to be taken by both service seekers and service providers in a fight against corruption. At first, the following open-ended question was posed to the service seeker respondents: As a stakeholder in service delivery process, how can you contribute the fight against corruption in land administration office? Majority of the respondents implied that speaking up against malpractice would bear a better result as coordinated public push for betterment of service would alert higher and middle officials to look in to what has gone wrong. Considering that middlemen are the main players in corruption, some respondents insisted that declining offer of middlemen and following cases by oneself as contributing to reduction of corruption. However, some respondents were not aware of the fact that most of the cases handled by middlemen to be those delegated to them by illegal land dealers and members of corruption criminal group who do not come to the sight of the public.

Other respondents implied that having a firm stance and resisting all forms of push to corruption as one possible measure to fight corruption. This includes knowing and trying to understand rules and regulations in place regarding the sort of service one is looking for, and demanding that one has the right to access services accordingly. Next is having a clear understanding of one's responsibility and fulfilling all items needed to access services. Doing this will help service seekers scape trap of being solicited for bribe. A number of responders were however so desperate about condition of corruption that they replied stating that they have no capacity to change or challenge the status quo. They asked back saying:

‘What power does the poor and the ordinary have so as to confront such an entrenched establishment?’

They indicated that appealing against a lower level staff would even result in negative outcomes such losing one's entire file from the records section or intimidation followed by failure to process cases in the premises. Complaining about lack of chain of command, a respondent stated the following:

I bought a plot of land for development and the person who sold that land to me fled to another country before I complete the legal transfer of ownership by giving me a

delegation. I invested on the land and the seller came back recently. Using a clerk in the records section, he tore and destroyed a document stating my delegation in the permanent file kept in the municipality. Making sure that the delegation was removed from the permanent file, he started threatening me saying that he has reversed his idea of selling the plot and bragged that he even did not know me. Since I had a copy of the delegation with me, I appealed the case to document authentication unit in the land administration. A lawyer in this section ordered documentation section to issue the file containing my plot but an ordinary clerk who is cooperating with my adversary blocked issuance of the file. I am here to appeal the case to the mayor and I do not know how and when this matter is to end.

A few others complained language as a challenge for them to address their concerns. However, as far as I observed, most of the staff in the municipality were conversant in both Afaan Oromo and Amharic languages.

The next question was about respondents' tendency and determination reporting incidences of malpractice including corruption. 50(62.5%) indicated that they would definitely report an incidence which is likely to involve corruption, and 30(37.5) indicated that they would refrain from reporting due to fear of reprisal or due to their own personality trait of not intending to indulge in others' affairs. It is worrying that some have concluded that reporting a lower level staff to higher or middle level supervisor as having no viable result stating that the bureaucracy and staffs at all levels being all the same when it comes to corruption. The relatively higher percentage of those who replied yes to this question might be linked to the recent reform allowing individuals and groups to express their concerns, including reporting malpractices in service delivery.

The last part of my research was designed in a form of interview to officers at Sebeta Land Administration, OEACC, Oromia Public Service and Oromia Justice Bureaus. Responding to question on whether his office was receiving feedback on service delivery from the public since the reform, Ato Ashenafi, who is team leader at Sebeta Land Administration reform process office indicated the following. 'We are inside our society, we do have mechanisms to gauge whether residents are getting satisfactory services or not. We are striving to attain better service delivery, and this cannot be done overnight. You see me here, walking here and there to make

sure that inconveniences are minimized.’ Asked if people he encountered were appreciative for reform already coming down to the local level or not, he stressed that there was observable change in how residents were being handled. He added that the main challenge his office is dealing with is that people were demanding a dramatic shift in how things were being done as an evidence of reform being broad based. According to Ato Ashenafi, reform has already come down to the local level.

Observing contradictions in the views of service seekers and officials in regard to reform coming down to the local level, my last contact was Dr. Bikila, who is head of Oromia public service office. I asked him if he believed that reform has reached the lower level bureaucracy and frontline cadre. According to Dr. Bikila, what has so far been seen is a higher-level political reform which itself has limitations as the regime does not seem to have full legitimacy. Added to this Dr. Bikila argued that the political reform which took place over a year ago has not been followed by administrative reforms which could have resulted in improvement in local level service delivery and reduction in prevalence of corruption. Regarding the current status of corruption, Dr. Bikila shared his belief that there was no major change as proper check and balance mechanisms have not been put in place. His final remark was that thinking of abolishing corruption and improving service delivery would be a futile task when this is undertaken without democratically elected and legitimate government.

Regarding current trend in combatting corruption in land administration in Sebeta, Ato Ashenafi did not feel comfortable commenting. However, Ato Hundara, team leader at Oromia Justice office for prosecution of corruption crimes indicated that there were no new cases referred to his office since the reform regarding land related corruption. He claimed that reduction in land related corruption crimes came as a result of higher public awareness making it difficult for land grabbers to occupy any plot without knowledge of the locals. According to Ato Hundara, petty crimes including bribe taking while processing cases for service seekers are still ongoing, but he indicated that such crimes were not reported to his office for prosecution.

Ato Tefera and his research team at OEACC stated that their office was engaged in undertaking public awareness creation seminars so as to enable communities understand corruption and its challenge on development. Other roles of the commission included office wide systems studies, and recovering resources embezzled through corruption. Regarding corrective measures, there

were no new charges as indicated above and there were no material or cash reimbursement reported. The department which was responsible for gathering public complaint and information /hint on corruption has remained without staff and receiving corruption reports remains discontinued.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 SUMMARY

This study was undertaken in an academic setting with the aim of understanding the current prevalence and impact on local service delivery of corruption in title deeds registration and transfer services at land administration office of Sebeta municipality. It also had the aim of understanding ways of combating corruption based on responses gathered from service seekers and relevant government line offices. To this end, the study has addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of corruption prevalence in land title deeds registration and transfer services of Sebeta land administration office?
2. How is corruption negatively impacting service delivery in Sebeta land administration office?
3. what possible measures can reduce corruption in land administration office of Sebeta Municipality?

To answer the above research questions, the necessary data was collected from over eighty service seekers sampled from among others in the premises of Sebeta municipality, three key informants, office team leader for land services reform desk at the municipality, OEACC, Oromia Justice Office and Oromia public service office. Service seekers in the research were selected using purposive sampling. This was used as it was important to identify respondents whose case was related to property title deeds transfer or registration. In the course of interviewing others, three individuals were identified who were willing to share their observation and problems they passed through while trying to get service at land administration office of Sebeta municipality.

5.1.1 FINDINGS ON PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION

The findings of this study show that sample population perceives corruption to be quite prevalent in the land administration office of Sebeta municipality. Corruption in the form of taking bribes, fraud and embezzlement, nepotism and extortion were said to be among the most prevalent forms. Respondents understand corruption as unlawful enrichment of oneself while adversely

affecting the livelihood of many others. In general, the respondents of this study perceive corruption as administrative and bureaucratic malpractices which are manifested in many different forms. On the issue of rumors and allegations of corruption, majority of respondents indicated that they have heard of someone who paid bribes including having acquaintances and close relatives who passed through this path. In regards to media coverage of corruption cases, most of the respondents indicated that they have not heard local media discuss identified corruption case as they suspect that there was a cover-up done by all parties including reporters who produce/ air contents which are contrary to reality they observed on the ground.

5.1.2 CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

A number of questions intended to gauge impact of corruption on service delivery were posed to the sample population. Asked whether they considered corruption as increasing or decreasing, over 50% of the respondents indicated their belief that corruption as increasing under the current reformist government. Some others stated that they failed to observe any significant change while some others indicated observing some promising changes. A sizable number of respondents indicated that they were asked by officers to pay bribes while processing their cases at the land administration office. Presence in the premises and interference of middlemen in the service delivery process was one factor which complicated the relationship between citizens and officers who were supposed to be serving the public. Sample population indicated that officers were focusing on cases presented to them by the middlemen while ordinary service seekers were told to come other days. Others complained that middlemen asked them for unfairly high payments for processing relatively simple cases. In regards to time taken at the municipality to finalize a certain case, majority of respondents were weary of waiting for months and years.

In regards to availability of officers in office at working hours, significant number of respondents complained that they were frequently failing to see officers responsible for processing their cases. Common pretext for absence from office was fieldwork but as indicated by OEACC researchers, land administration officers might be engaged in other tasks aimed at enriching themselves and their networks. Asked if they believed that corruption as negatively impacted service delivery, majority of respondents stated that it was an obvious fact. They indicated that the negative impact of corruption on service delivery was immense.

5.1.3 MEASURES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

Asked how they would contribute to the fight against corruption, most of respondents indicated that speaking up against malpractices would be their share. Others indicated that refusing to go on the path of paying bribes and demanding transparency in procedures would bear results. Others however indicated their desperateness saying that they had no power to challenge the current status quo in which corruption perpetrators have linkages in all levels and thus can retaliate if they identify someone as a whistleblower. In regards to responses I obtained from officials in government institutions contacted, there seems a tendency to see bribery and small scale frauds as normal breaches which does not require attention of the public. They claimed that large scale corruption such as land grabs have now come to the minimal level due to heightened public awareness and reforms taking roots. Neglecting petty corruption such as seeking bribes in most of the offices where the public is seeking services is worrying.

In general, the findings in the preceding sections agree with theory which considers corruption as a collective action problem. This is because the study identified sizable number of respondents who were willing to pay bribes while attempting to access services at the land administration of the municipality. The findings also conform to the theory of needs and greed. The lower level staffs of the municipality seem to be engaged in corruption as their salaries are barely enough for upkeep of their families and thus corruption committed at this level is needs motivated. On the other hand, higher level government officials who engage in corruption seem to be motivated by greed. The findings also confirm the ideas in the theoretical framework which states that corruption tends to increase in a situation where the country is undergoing transition. This is due to the fact that there is low level of accountability and transparency in the civil service. This study has confirmed the widely discussed high prevalence of corruption and its negative impact on service delivery at the local level to be real and observable.

In summary, one can conclude from the findings that:

- Despite high level political reform which took place over a year ago, local level service delivery is marred with corruption and it seems that the promises of delivering on the reform has not materialized. Administrative reform which was supposed to follow the higher-level political reform has not taken place.

- There is a tendency to consider bribe taking and bribing as a new normal among the public servants and the wider public. This happened because there was no one brought to justice for perpetrating corruption in Sebeta municipality and particularly in land administration office.
- Respondents consider Sebeta municipality and all its sectoral offices as some of the most corrupt places compared to other places in the country. Rumors of some one bribing some officer is a common place.
- According to respondents, Corruption is currently on the rise in Sebeta Municipality. They argue that the same old guard which was crafted in plundering resources of the public are currently holding office, even reorganizing and entrenching themselves so that attempts to reform service delivery would not affect them.
- Significant number of respondents reported being asked to pay bribes. Added to this, high number of middlemen are engaged in day to day activities of processing cases, making it difficult for ordinary citizens to get a chance to process their own cases.
- Cases presented to officers at land administration are left to take too long to complete while middlemen were given priority over ordinary citizens. This implies that there were benefit sharing plan between middlemen and officers in the land administration office.
- Overall, corruption has negatively impacted service delivery at land administration office of Sebeta Municipality. Repetitive appointments and lack of finding officers in office was a common problem raised by respondents.
- Most of the respondents indicated that they would speak up seeking fairness and speed in getting their cases processed.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the major findings stated above, the following recommendations would help mitigate corruption in Sebeta Land Administration Office. The recommendations could be used by the municipality, OEACC, and other bodies that can contribute in the fight against corruption in the town.

1. Promises of local level reform and better service delivery cannot be achieved without willingness of leadership at all levels. The top level has set the tone in a manner which was impressive. In the current setting, the lower level leadership seems less willing to accommodate reform as it is sharing from proceeds of criminal activities such as corruption. Failure to deliver on the promise of reform(at lower level) will cost the reformist team immensely as it leads to lack of legitimacy and being voted out should there be a free and fair election. Reforming local level leadership and service delivery should thus be considered a matter of survival and should be given priority.
2. There was a tradition of reassigning someone who committed corruption crime in a certain zone or town to some other town or zone in place of bringing that person to justice. The public is tired of such reshuffles and wants to see concrete steps implemented towards insuring rule of law. Those who committed corruption crimes, be it grand or petty corruption should be indicted where they committed the crime. If this is not done, public trust which is already too low will run out. To this effect, both OEACC and Oromia Justice office corruption crimes prosecution bench should reassess themselves on whether they are currently delivering on the mandates they were entrusted with.
3. Corruption is currently considered norm of the day. The public considers that most of the public servants are taking bribes while processing cases for their citizen customers. This tendency of considering corruption as a normal activity should be tackled by strengthening awareness on negative impact of corruption on development, service delivery and wellbeing of communities. This task should not be left to government line offices alone. NGOs, religious leaders, community leaders and other relevant organs should take this responsibility.
4. On Service delays, there should be a mechanism to structure performance measurement based on meeting requirements set. For example, if a certifying officer agrees to process

twenty documents a day as his performance goal; and consistently fails to meet those targets, his job evaluation should flag that he failed to deliver on what he agreed to. Such failure to deliver should lead to removal of the person from the job, and the position should be given to more competent personnel. There should also be a standard length of time set for cases to be completed given that the service seeker has all the documentation in place.

5. Residents should be involved in the fight against corruption by letting them access to secure methods to act as whistleblower and engaging them in all matters impacting their communities. Mobilization and strengthening of civil society sector will enable them to take the role of oversight on activities of officers.
6. Deals and cases processed through middlemen should be limited or if possible stopped. This helps in availing working hours to cases presented by community service seekers who would otherwise be left to wait too long while middlemen and their cases are being entertained. Middlemen who are crowding out working hours of officers are part of the informal sector which is not contributing to development as they are not paying taxes on their earnings.
7. There should be initiatives aimed at increasing transparency, accountability and efficiency of municipality services and urban land administration. Flow of information which could improve local service delivery should be facilitated to go both ways, towards the community and also the local government organs.
8. There should be increased use of information technology in combating corruption and improving local service delivery. Digital documentation would avoid likelihood of losing important files. Allocation of ownership of a single plot to several people would also be avoided if documentation was digitalized and properly linked to correct coordinates.

These recommendations, if implemented properly would help the municipality curb the problem of persistent corruption and delays in service delivery which results from corruption. If Sebeta municipality and Land Administration there were to implement these recommendations, service seekers who used to wait for years and months will access services in reasonable length of time. Service seekers will also be spared from paying bribes while attempting their cases get processed at the municipality.

If Sebeta municipality was able to improve service delivery and curb corruption by implementing these recommendations, there is a possibility that other towns and cities in the region/ in the country would copy and replicate the recommendations to their specific locations. This may also lead to other towns and cities succeed in reducing corruption and improve service delivery. Collective success of cities and towns will lead to national success in improving service delivery and curbing corruption.

If corruption and its negative implications are stressed in discourses of communities, tendency to consider corruption as normal routine would no more remain common. This will bring attitudinal change in the community and over the long term, the community would start detesting any push leading to corruption.

During the course of this study, I have observed a number of respondents who stressed the role of middlemen in complicating service delivery, corrupting the officers and dictating day to day activities of land administration office employees as they were alleged to be sharing proceeds in activities of middlemen. I have not managed to understand this issue to its core and I recommend a future research in this area. Possible topic could be the nexus between corruption, middlemen and delays in service delivery.

My experience of interacting with service seekers inside Sebeta municipality was fascinating. Some respondents were quite eager to voice their difficulties processing their cases at the premises. They tended to take too long discussing an issue which was not my area of interest, but I was generously attentive to their narrations of what they faced. On the other hand, some were too suspicious of an attempt to discuss corruption and service delivery. Some stated that they trust no one in the premises and preferred avoidance. When I was interviewing community members, some plain cloth security officers were following me so as to understand who I was. They latter reported me to some office head who interrogated me on why I was discussing such sensitive issue in the public. I stated that it was an academic project and showed them my ID and support request letter issued from Addis Ababa University. The officer ordered me to calm people who are getting emotional during the discussions and I stayed there another three days interviewing service seekers and told me his willingness to support me in case I needed his support.

I have observed that there were some good-hearted employees who were praised by a number of service seekers for dedications they show to serve the public and their respect for all people who happen to seek their service and guidance. However, as cases are processed at different levels, being handled in good manner in one section cannot put cases to final stage unless all sections were working in concerted effort to give efficient and timely services.

In conclusion, demand for reforms in service delivery and transparency as advanced by local communities does not seem to have been addressed. There is a strong sense that petty corruption is being taken for granted and this will lead to further erosion of trust in the bureaucracy. High prevalence of corruption and lack of improvement in service delivery will lead to lack of legitimacy of the local government organs. Lack of legitimacy will be manifested in citizens refusing to obey rules and regulations including failure to declare and pay taxes, reducing government revenues. Reduced government revenues will in turn make it difficult for the system to pay fair salaries to its employees. Employees who are barely paid would resort to seeking bribes as their means of survival. Bold measures should be taken so as to break out of this vicious cycle.

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APPENDIX
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am student at school of graduate studies of Addis Ababa University, pursuing Master of Art Degree in Public Management and Policy. Currently, I am conducting MA thesis (research) on “ASSESSMENT OF CORRUPTION ON TITLE DEEDS REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER SERVICES OF SEBETA TOWN ADMINISTRATION.’ Responses given are solely meant for this academic writing and will in no way affect any person or organization that is giving response to the questionnaire items. Please be reassured that all the information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and in considerations of privacy.

PART ONE: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Sex: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Marital Status: _____
4. Educational Status: _____
5. Address: _____
6. Current occupation and monthly income: _____

PART TWO: QUESTIONS ON PREVALECE OF CORRUPTION

1. What type of corruption is most prevalent in Sebeta municipality?

Type of corruption considered prevalent	Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Bribery					
Fraud and embezzlement					

Nepotism/Favoritism					
Extortion (pressure)					

Any other form of corruption you may have knowledge of _____.

2. Do you know someone who bribed land administration officers to get his/her case processed and managed to get prompt service? Was the amount paid considered high or low compared to facilitations made?

3. Have you read social media posts, blogs or comments hinting that there were land related corruption in the municipality? Was the post credible?

PART THREE: QUESTIONS ON WHETHER CORRUPTION IS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Do you consider that corruption is increasing or decreasing under the current administration? Why is that?

2. Have you been asked to pay bribes while attempting to get land transfer/ registration services at the municipality?

3. In connection to Q2 above, did any middlemen approach you stating that they have connections in the municipality enabling them to facilitate cases easily?

4. Regarding time taken at the municipality to complete a certain case, e.g. land title deeds transfer, do you consider time taken for the process as too long, fair or short? Why is it so?

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-
- Coming to the land administration office to see officers responsible to handle your case, how often do you fail to see them in the office? Where do you think are they going when they are not in office?
-
-
-

- Assertion on whether corruption has negatively impacted service delivery in Sebeta municipality.

Claim/ Assertion	Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Corruption has negatively impacted service delivery in land admin office of Sebeta municipality.					

PART FOUR: QUESTIONS ON POSSIBLE MEASURES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

4A. For Service seekers:

- As a stakeholder in the service delivery process, how can you contribute to the fight against corruption in land administration office?

- If you come across an incidence which might seem to involve corruption, do you opt to report the incidence to law enforcement agencies? Have you reported any such incidence so far?

4B. for officials in Oromia land administration office and regional anti-corruption commission.

General interview questions in the following order:

1. Do you get feedback of service seekers on status of service delivery after the recent reform?
2. Do people acknowledge that the reform has reached the local level, or do they complain that it is yet to come down?
3. What is the trend in combatting corruption in land resources? In the case of Sebeta.
4. What preventative measures have your offices put in place so as to curb corruption in land services?
5. In the last 6 months how many land related corruption cases were apprehended? Particularly in Sebeta municipality area.