



Fighting the gendered impact of corruption

Gaelle DEMOLIS

UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the
Pacific

 **iACT** to fight corruption!

**UN
WOMEN**

ADB

Corruption disproportionately affects women



WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO PAY BRIBES FOR **HEALTH SERVICES**

Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) – Latin America and the Caribbean, Transparency International

Corruption disproportionately affects women



POORER WOMEN ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO PAYING BRIBES FOR COURT SERVICES COMPARED TO WEALTHIER WOMEN



ONLY 1 IN 10 WOMEN WHO PAID A BRIBE IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, REPORTED IT TO THE AUTHORITIES

Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) – Latin America and the Caribbean, Transparency International

Gendered impacts of corruption

- 1. Corruption creates barriers to accessing basic public services and resources:** Because poor women are the primary users of basic public services (water, health and education), they pay disproportionately for corruption in service delivery.
- 2. Bribes are a greater proportion of women's income:** Statistically, women have lower incomes than men therefore bribes affect disproportionately their income.
- 3. Application of the rule of law in advancing rights and providing protection from abuse:** Women's statistically lower literacy levels, which often result in a relative lack of knowledge of rights and entitlements to services and public programmes, leave them more vulnerable to extortion and abuses of laws
- 4. Corruption that takes the form of sexual extortion:** Corruption's impact on women may be greater than men's when the currency of bribes is in the form of sexual favours



1 IN 5

PEOPLE EXPERIENCES
SEXTORTION OR KNOWS
SOMEONE WHO HAS

some women are coerced to provide sexual favours in order to receive public services, including health care and education, and good grades.*

*The release of the [Global Corruption Barometer \(GCB\) – Latin America and the Caribbean](#) is an important step for understanding how corruption affects women.



Illustration: UN Women/ Uri Matus Vega

Sextorsion
a silent form of
corruption



Marie (nom d'emprunt), l'une des nombreuses victimes de harcèlement sexuel dans le lycées sénégalaise, le 17 octobre 2018. Matteo Maillard

Sexual bribery/ Sextorsion

Research on military widows who faced various, often multiple, instances of sexual bribery and other forms of sexual exploitation



Key findings:

1. Military personnel and policemen are perceiving **widows and single women as particularly vulnerable**, malleable and open to sexual predation.
2. Of the 16 cases of sexual bribery that were mentioned by the interviewees, only 2 widows had lodged complaints
3. Key reasons why women did not lodge complaints were **fear of reprisals** from the military and government officers and **fear of social stigma** and losing honor and respect
4. The fact that **none of the complaints were taken seriously** nor the perpetrators punished resulted in further disillusionment for the 2 widows who had lodged complaints

Sexual bribery/ Sextorsion

The links between power, sex and corruption

TI Report published 5 March 2020



Key findings:

1. Sextortion occurs in many sectors, including **education, the police, the courts and the civil service**.
2. It can affect anyone, but it disproportionately targets people from **marginalised and vulnerable groups**.
3. It is **harder to report** than other forms of corruption. In many cases, there are **no safe and gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms** that can provide the support survivors/victims of sexual abuse often need.
4. Many anti-corruption legal frameworks **do not explicitly criminalise** coercive sexual acts as forms of bribery, abuse of authority or corrupt wrongdoing.

A photograph of three women in a meeting. The woman in the foreground is in profile, looking towards the left. She has dark hair tied back and is wearing a yellow jacket over a white shirt. Two other women are visible in the background, also in profile, looking in the same direction. They are wearing light-colored blouses. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a meeting room with posters on the wall.

**Are women less corrupted than men?
Does having more women in positions
of power will make a difference?**

No, women are not intrinsically immune to corruption because they are women!

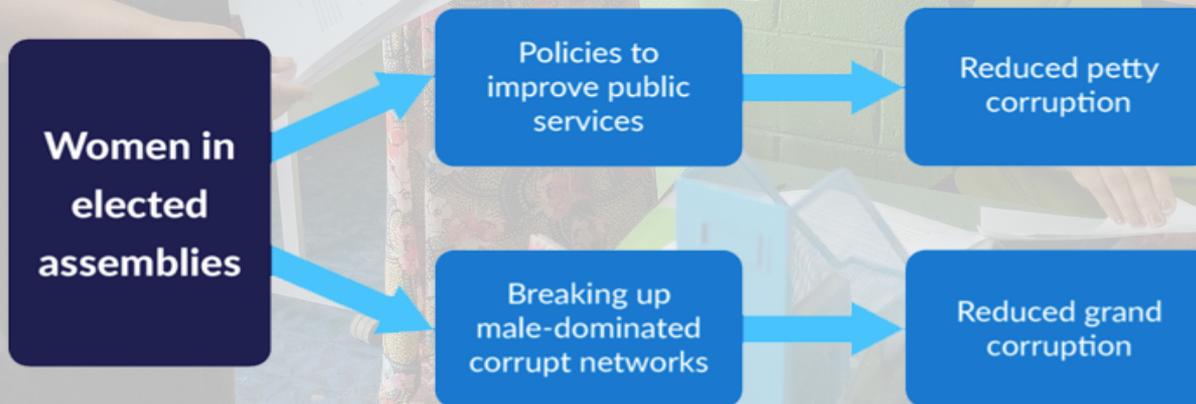
- Women may have limited opportunities for corruption, particularly when corruption functions through all-male networks and in forums from which women are usually socially excluded.

But a more balanced and representative institutions can help in reducing corruption

- Influx of **new, outside nonparticipants** sufficiently disturbs the networks and reduces the effects of corruption
- Increasing the number of female politicians/public officials is usually accompanied by “fairer systems”, **building public accountability and governance systems that are transparent and responsive to women’s and men’s needs**
- More women in law enforcement **reduces the risk of sextorsion**



Some research have demonstrated that the increased representation of women in elected office can reduce both petty and grand corruption



Source: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. 2018

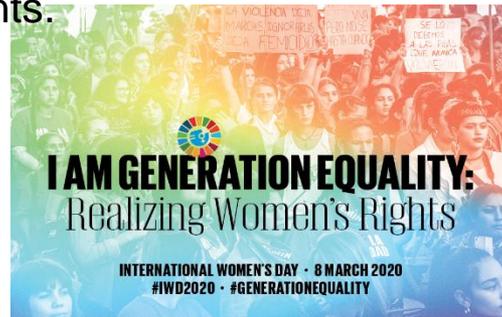
What can we do?

Enabling Environment against corruption

- Gender Equality, increasing women's understanding of their rights, increasing Women's Access to Justice, Increasing women's political participation and Gender Responsive Budgeting

Targeted approaches

- Work with governments to recognize sexual extortion as a form of corruption
 - Put in place gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms, including through promoting women in Anti-corruption Agencies
 - Review integrity checklist or other guidance from a gender perspective
 - Strengthening the capacities of law enforcement officers on how to conduct investigation from a gender and victim centered perspective
 - Supporting national in intergovernmental bodies to collect data on Gender and Corruption.
 - Support the revision of the laws to include sextorsion as a form of bribery
- ➔ Particularly relevant in the context of COVID 19 /lockdowns and increased Security Sector presence and checkpoints.



Questions?

