

# People's Attitude towards Corruption and Anti-Corruption Commission



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## Table of Contents

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Table of Contents</b> .....                              | <b>i</b>   |
| <b>Table of Tables</b> .....                                | <b>ii</b>  |
| <b>Table of Figures</b> .....                               | <b>ii</b>  |
| <b>Summary</b> .....  | <b>iii</b> |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....                                   | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Objectives</b> .....                                     | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Methodology</b> .....                                    | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Limitations</b> .....                                    | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Findings</b> .....                                       | <b>2</b>   |
| Gender Representation.....                                  | 2          |
| Age Distribution of Respondents.....                        | 2          |
| Occupational Distribution.....                              | 3          |
| <b>Perceptions of Corruption</b> .....                      | <b>4</b>   |
| What is Corruption?.....                                    | 4          |
| Rating Corruption .....                                     | 5          |
| Prevailing Corrupt Practices .....                          | 6          |
| <b>Causes of Corruption</b> .....                           | <b>7</b>   |
| The Major Causes of Corruption .....                        | 8          |
| <b>Personal Experiences of Corruption</b> .....             | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>Effect of Corruption</b> .....                           | <b>10</b>  |
| <b>Willingness to report corruption</b> .....               | <b>11</b>  |
| Reasons to report corruption.....                           | 12         |
| Reasons not to report corruption.....                       | 12         |
| <b>Awareness and Perceptions of ACC</b> .....               | <b>13</b>  |
| <b>Awareness of ACC</b> .....                               | <b>13</b>  |
| Source of ACC's awareness.....                              | 13         |
| Functions of ACC .....                                      | 14         |
| Recommended functions of ACC .....                          | 15         |
| Assessment of ACC .....                                     | 15         |
| ACC's effectiveness in the fight against corruption.....    | 15         |
| Reasons for not being effective.....                        | 16         |
| <b>ACC Publications and Multi-media</b> .....               | <b>17</b>  |
| Publications.....   | 17         |
| TV Spots, Radio Jingles and Road Shows.....                 | 18         |
| Lessons learnt from TV Spots.....                           | 19         |
| Lessons from Radio Jingles .....                            | 19         |
| Lessons from Road shows .....                               | 20         |
| Relevance of road shows .....                               | 20         |
| <b>Suggestions towards improving public education</b> ..... | <b>21</b>  |
| <b>Recommendations</b> .....                                | <b>22</b>  |
| <b>Conclusion</b> .....                                     | <b>24</b>  |

## Table of Tables

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Corruption rating by occupational groups .....                                     | 5  |
| Table 2: Causes of corruption .....   | 7  |
| Table 3: Willingness to report corruption by occupational groups.....                       | 11 |
| Table 4: Reasons not to report corruption.....  | 12 |
| Table 5: Sources of awareness.....  | 14 |
| Table 6: Effectiveness of ACC in fighting corruption by occupational groups. ....           | 16 |
| Table 7: Reasons for ACC being ineffective in fighting corruption.....                      | 17 |
| Table 8: Percentage of respondents having read ACC Publications by occupational groups..... | 18 |
| Table 9: Lessons from TV Spots .....  | 19 |
| Table 10: Lessons from Radio Jingles .....  | 20 |
| Table 11: Lessons from Road Shows.....  | 20 |

## Table of Figures

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Figure 1: Respondents by gender .....</i>                                   | <i>2</i>  |
| <i>Figure 2: Age distribution of survey participants.....</i>                  | <i>3</i>  |
| <i>Figure 3: Occupation of respondents .....</i>                               | <i>3</i>  |
| <i>Figure 4: Definition of corruption .....</i>                                | <i>4</i>  |
| <i>Figure 5: Rating corruption.....</i>  | <i>5</i>  |
| <i>Figure 6: Perceptions of corruption .....</i>                               | <i>6</i>  |
| <i>Figure 7: Major causes of corruption .....</i>                              | <i>8</i>  |
| <i>Figure 8: Personal experience of corruption by occupational groups.....</i> | <i>9</i>  |
| <i>Figure 9: Corruption effects .....</i>                                      | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Figure 10: Willingness to report corruption .....</i>                       | <i>11</i> |
| <i>Figure 11: Major reasons for reporting corruption .....</i>                 | <i>12</i> |
| <i>Figure 12: Awareness of ACC .....</i>                                       | <i>13</i> |
| <i>Figure 13: Functions of ACC as understood by the respondents .....</i>      | <i>14</i> |
| <i>Figure 14: Functions of ACC as recommended by the respondents .....</i>     | <i>15</i> |
| <i>Figure 15: ACC as assessed by the respondents .....</i>                     | <i>15</i> |
| <i>Figure 16: The reach of ACC's publications.....</i>                         | <i>18</i> |
| <i>Figure 17: Reaching the mass through multi-media .....</i>                  | <i>19</i> |
| <i>Figure 18: Relevance of the road shows.....</i>                             | <i>21</i> |

## **Summary**

Since its establishment, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had carried out a nation wide Corruption Perception Survey (CPS) and the report was published in 2008. This survey is the first of its kind that looks into people's attitude towards corruption and the ACC and also serves as a supplement to the CPS carried out earlier. The findings from the CPS as well as this study are expected to facilitate and guide the future activities of the ACC. The survey was conducted from June to December 2008 in six dzongkhags with a total sample size of 332 of which 62 percent were male and 37 percent female. One percent of the respondents had not mentioned their gender. The sample was dominated by civil servants with 56 percent, followed by students with 25 percent. The rest included farmers, private employees or business enterprises and corporate employees. Selected findings from the study are as presented below:

### **Defining Corruption**

From a total of 332 respondents, 41 percent perceive corruption as misuse of public funds and embezzlement, 35 percent perceive it as an abuse of authority, 15 percent perceive it as favoritism and nepotism and seven percent perceive it as bribery.

### **Rating Corruption**

70 percent of the respondents considered corruption to be a major problem, while 20 percent felt it to be a minor problem.

### **Prevailing Corrupt Practices**

Favoritism and nepotism did not feature highly in terms of defining corruption, but 20 percent of the respondents have shown it to be the most prevalent form of corruption, followed closely by bribery (17 percent) and embezzlement (16 percent).

### **Causes of Corruption**

Weak management and poor leadership featured as the major cause of corruption in the country with 68 percent followed by lack of incentives with 22 percent and social factors with 11 percent.

### **Personal Experiences of Corruption**

Respondents were asked if they experienced any kind of corruption during the past 12 months. To this, only 23 percent reported of having first hand experience or being a victim of corruption while 75 percent did not have any experience. The sample size being dominated by public servants and students could be the determinant factor for a low percentage of people having experienced or been a victim of corruption.

### **Effect of Corruption**

Majority of the respondents (61 percent) felt that corruption would affect their family life. On the economic environment, 59 percent felt that corruption would affect it. In general more than 50 percent of the respondents felt that corruption would definitely affect different spheres of life.

### **Willingness to report corruption**

Majority of the respondents (68%) said they would report corruption if they came across it while 26 percent were not very sure about it.

### **Reasons to report corruption**

From the group that are willing to report corruption, 54 percent felt that changes would be brought about if corruption is reported followed by 44 percent who said that it was their responsibility to report corruption.

### **Reasons not to report corruption**

Amongst the survey participants, 32 percent were either not sure or were not willing to report corruption. Amongst this group 43.5 percent reported that they were afraid of the consequences such as fear of being called as a witness and being ostracized by the society. At the same time 20 percent felt that nothing useful would be done even if they reported about it. The other reasons given by the respondents are based on social grounds and it not being their responsibility.

### **Awareness about ACC**

ACC is well known to the public with 95 percent of the survey participants having heard about it. People have learnt about the ACC mainly through television and newspapers.

### **Functions of ACC**

While most of the respondents knew the functions of ACC, there were also participants who were not clear about its functions. While 28 percent of the respondents felt that investigation was the major function of ACC, 19 percent felt that it was identification of systemic flaws. Around 17 percent of the respondents also thought that it was also the function of ACC to prosecute corrupt officials.

## **Recommended functions of ACC**

The recommended functions of ACC by the respondents fall mostly in the prevention strategies with 89 percent, followed by investigation with 67 percent and public education with 55 percent.

## **ACC's effectiveness in the fight against corruption**

Only 31 percent of the respondents felt ACC as being affective in the fight against corruption while 53 percent felt that it was somewhat effective. Five percent felt it was totally ineffective. Lack of trained personnel in the ACC has come out as the main reason for its ineffectiveness followed by the lack of support from the government and ACC being lenient to the rich and the powerful.

## **ACC Publications and Multi-media**

### **Publications**

Interestingly, the ACC report had the highest number of readers though the annual report is not issued to individuals but only to organizations. It can therefore be assumed that respondents have misunderstood it and may have taken any other articles on ACC or by ACC as a report. While bulletin and leaflets are supposed to target the largest number of readers as a means of creating awareness, the number of respondents unaware of it shows that it has not been successful.

### **Muti-media`**

The most effective multi media to create awareness so far has been the use of television followed by road shows. Approximately, 75 percent of the respondents have watched the TV spots produced by ACC while 65 percent have witnessed the road shows carried out in 15 Dzongkhags in 2008. On the other hand, radio jingles have been effective with 61 percent of the respondents having heard the jingles.

## **Introduction**

Bhutan was not compelled to initiate anti-corruption measures or establish the Anti-corruption Commission based on the magnitude of corruption problem in the country. The whole concept of anti-corruption measures in the country emerged from the vision of our beloved Monarch, the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck; - a vision that saw changes in the Bhutanese thinking process corresponding with economic development and saw political corruption imminent with the country's transition to parliamentary democracy. The ACC was thus established in 2006 with three major functions: investigation, prevention and public education and advocacy to fight and curb corruption before it became uncontrollable.

The establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission could not have been better timed than when the country was enjoying rapid economic development and establishing parliamentary democracy. It would definitely help generate awareness and inform people of the wider concept of corruption and also prepare ACC and the Government to tackle corruption more effectively and efficiently.

Since the establishment of the ACC, it has carried out a nation wide Corruption Perception Survey (CPS) in 2007. This survey, though, is the first of its kind that looks into people's attitude towards corruption and the ACC, also serves as a supplement to the CPS. This report in a way is not much different from the CPS but makes a further attempt to understand what constitutes corruption from people's view point, the reach of ACC's awareness programs, find out the obstacles in reporting corruption and to understand personal experiences of corruption.

## **Objectives**

The survey was conducted with the following objectives:

- To look into people's attitude towards corruption and what activities they believe constitute corruption;
- To estimate people's direct and indirect exposure to corruption and issues related to reporting corruption; and
- To learn about people's knowledge about ACC, its roles and their views on its effectiveness.

## **Methodology**

The survey was carried out in six Dzongkhags: Thimphu, Samtse, Bumthang, Trashigang, Samdrup Jongkhar and Paro. The respondents were selected randomly. Respondents who could read and write were distributed the structured questionnaire form to be filled up and collected while face to face interview was conducted for those who could not read and write. During the face to face interview, respondents were encouraged to express their views openly and were also assured that their responses would only be used for analysis and report generation and not for investigative purposes.

## Limitations

The survey was intended to be carried out in eight Dzongkhags covering a sample size of 600 where the respondents would be included from all walks of life. This could, however, be not achieved. The initial proposal was to target certain number of public servants, business members, students, monks, armed force personnel and farmers. However, we could not include any armed force personnel in the survey as we could not get permission from the Army Headquarters to carry out the survey. We also could not interview any monks. An attempt to seek the views of some monks failed miserably when they did not have any idea on most of the questions being asked. This can also be taken as a failure on the part of the researcher for not being able to probe deeper or ask the right questions. Respondents therefore, included mostly civil servants and students, and the sample size for business and corporate employee groups is also small.

## Findings

### Gender Representation

A total of 332 from six Dzongkhags were interviewed for this survey. Overall 205 males and 123 females were taken up for the survey while four of the respondents did not specify their gender (Figure 1).

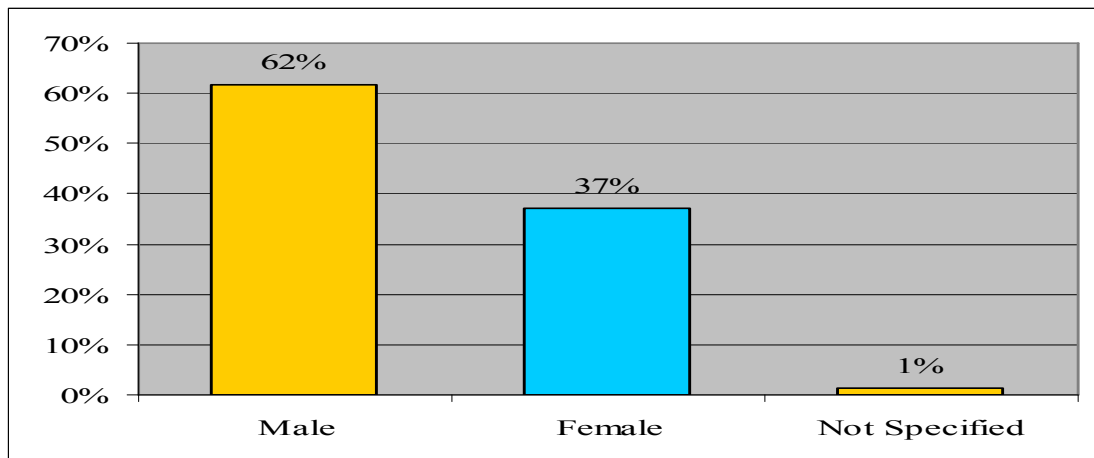


Figure 1: Respondents by gender

### Age Distribution of Respondents

Majority of the respondents were within the age range of 15-25 (36 percent), followed by 28 percent within the range of 26-35 years of age. About 11 percent of the respondents had not specified their age (Figure 2). With the maximum number of respondents falling between 15 and 35 years of age, this report in a certain way can be seen as the views of the younger generation.



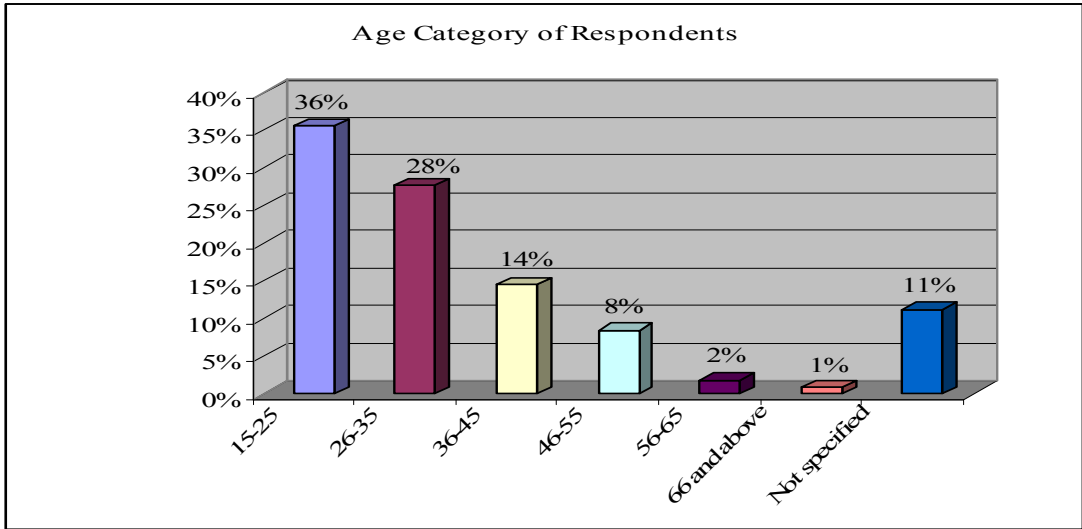


Figure 2: Age distribution of survey participants

### Occupational Distribution

Looking into the occupation of the respondents, 56 percent were civil servants, 25 percent students, nine percent business enterprises/private employees or self employed, seven percent farmers and three percent corporate employees (Figure 3). The sample being dominated by civil servants, and considering them to be more informed of the government policies against corruption and the happenings around, their responses could serve as determining factors to see where ACC stands in terms of its functions, efficiency in fighting corruption and also their attitude towards the Commission

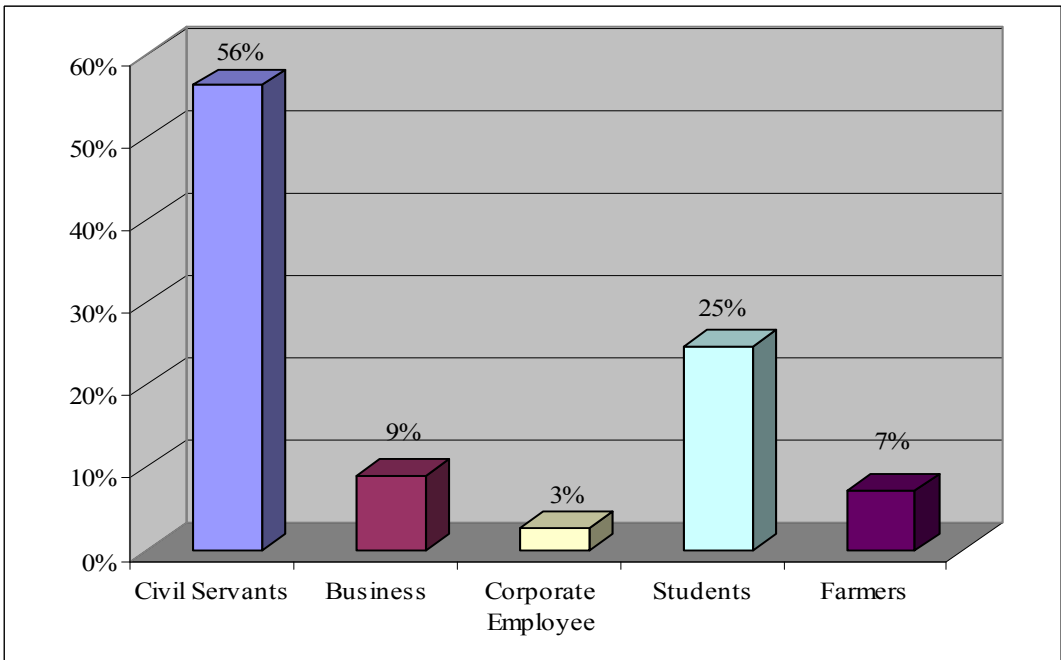


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents

## Perceptions of Corruption

### What is Corruption?

Corruption is conventionally understood, and referred to, as the private wealth seeking behavior of someone who represents the state and the public authority. It is the misuse of public resources by public officials, for private gains. The encyclopedia and working definition used by the World Bank, Transparency International and others is that corruption is *the abuse of public power for private benefit (or profit)*. Another widely used definition is that corruption is a transaction between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private-regarding payoffs (Heidenheimer et al. 1989:6).

ACC also wanted to find out how to define corruption in our own context. The respondents were, therefore, asked to tick their understanding of corruption based on some phrases provided on the questionnaire and then rank them accordingly. Not all the respondents have ticked the phrases that can define corruption while some of the respondents have ticked one, two or three phrases. However, to simplify the analysis, only those phrases ranked as number one has been taken into consideration to define corruption.

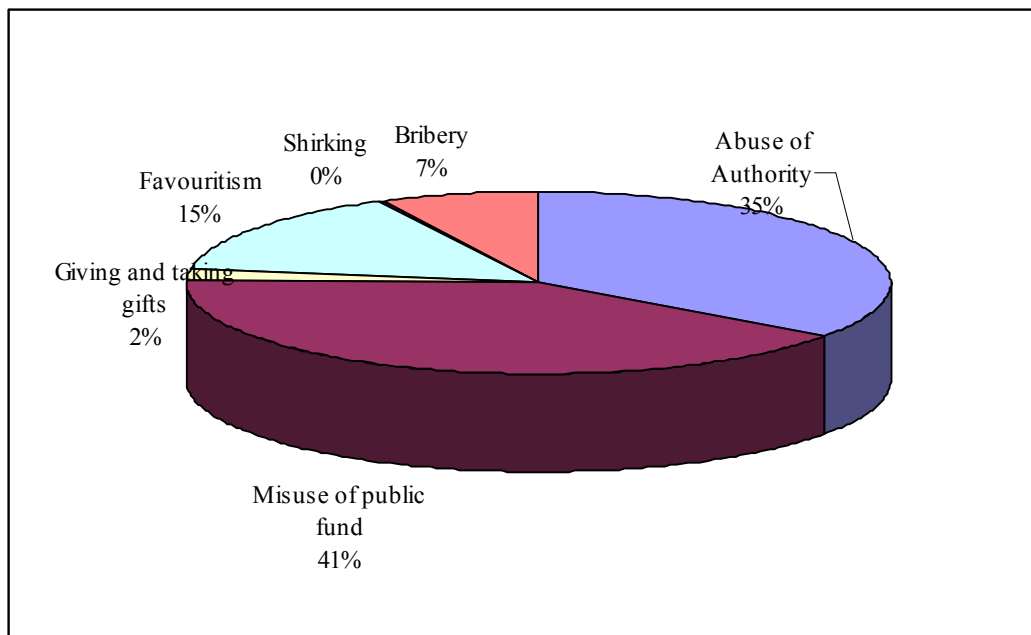


Figure 4: Definition of corruption

Based on the number of respondents who have ticked the phrases as to that defines corruption the most, misuse of public funds and embezzlement (41 percent) topped the list followed by abuse of authority (35 percent), favoritism and nepotism (15 percent) and bribery (7 percent). Other features such as giving and taking gifts and shirking have scored very low points. The low score for giving and taking gifts could have arisen as it is deeply rooted in the Bhutanese culture.

Therefore, based on the understanding and perception of the people, corruption is authority-based and, therefore, can be defined as “ *Abusing one’s authority through misuse of public funds for private gains, favoring one’s own friends and relatives, embezzling government properties, offering and receiving bribes*”.

### Rating Corruption

The survey respondents were asked to rate the seriousness of corruption in the country. Majority of the respondents (70 percent) considered corruption to be a major problem, while 20 percent felt it to be a minor problem. At the same time two percent of the respondents did not perceive it to be a problem while eight percent (Figure 5) said that they do not know anything about it. With majority of the respondents perceiving corruption as a major problem in the country, it is imperative that proper corruption prevention strategies and corruption fighting techniques are put in place.

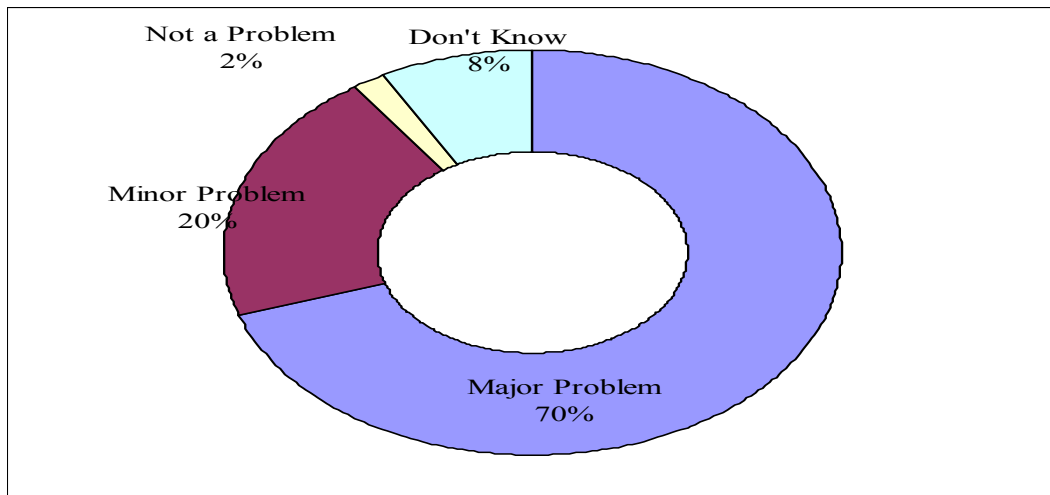


Figure 5: Rating corruption

However, going by different occupational groups, 88 percent of the farmers felt corruption to be a major problem followed by public servants with 71 percent. Eight percent of the farmers were not sure about corruption being a major problem or not.

**Table 1: Corruption rating by occupational groups**

| Corruption Rating | Civil Servants (n=187) | Business (n=30) | Corporate Employees (n=9) | Students (n=82) | Farmers (n=24) |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Major Problem     | 71%                    | 63%             | 33%                       | 70%             | 88%            |
| Minor Problem     | 22%                    | 17%             | 33%                       | 21%             | 4%             |
| Not a problem     | 1%                     | 7%              | 0%                        | 1%              | 0%             |
| Don't Know        | 6%                     | 13%             | 33%                       | 9%              | 8%             |

## Prevailing Corrupt Practices

While it is generally acknowledged that corruption is not an acceptable behavior, it does not carry a heavy social stigma in Bhutan. To be known as a corrupt person in Bhutan is not generally or widely viewed as a great or lasting shame even though we live in a small society. However, it cannot be ruled out that there is no corruption in Bhutan but it can be said to exist in different forms and at varying degrees.

The Corruption Perception Survey (2007) ranked ‘Nepotism and Favoritism’ as the most prevalent form of corruption followed by ‘misuse of public funds’ and bribery. In line with the CPS 2007, this study also confirms that favoritism and nepotism is the highest form of corruption in the country.

It indicates that favoritism and nepotism is an every day practice in a small society like that of Bhutan. People know that it is happening but have not felt the real cost of it. However, now there is a general acknowledgement of the consequences. The other prevalent forms of corruption in the country are bribery, embezzlement, self dealing and patronage (Figure 6).

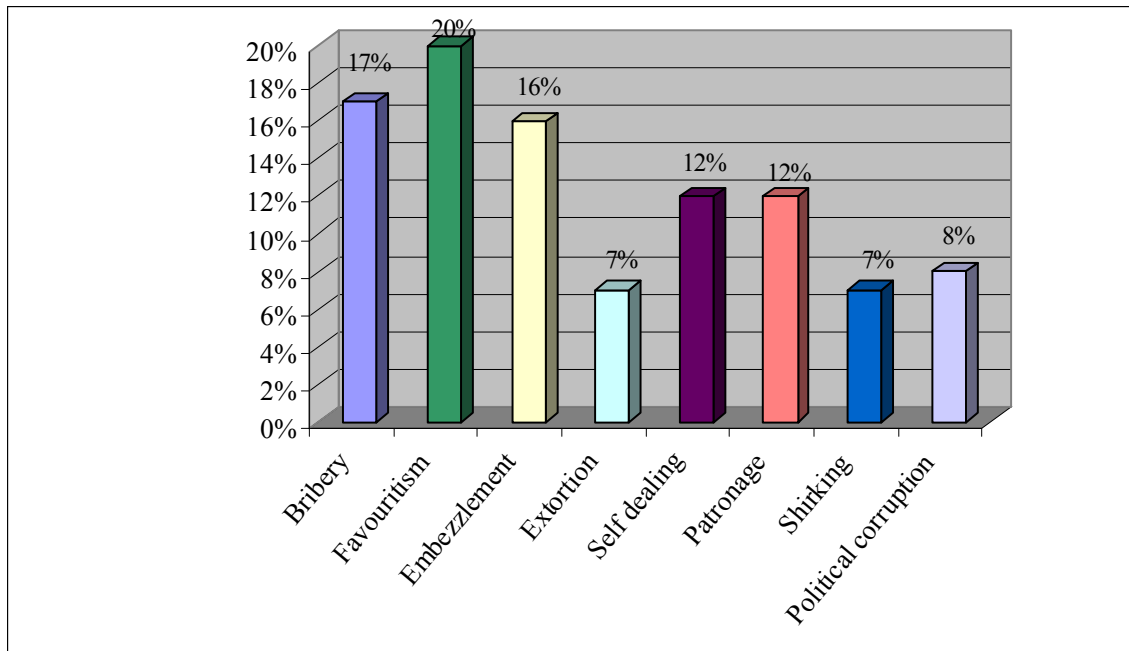


Figure 6: Perceptions of corruption

Favoritism and nepotism did not feature highly in terms of defining corruption, but the respondents (20 percent) have shown it to be the most prevalent form of corruption, followed closely by bribery (17 percent) and embezzlement (16 percent). Favoritism and nepotism, together with patronage, self dealing and embezzlement are all related to misuse of authority. Misuse of authority on the other hand arises purely due to the presence of overall weak management and poor leadership. When the leaders themselves

tend to be corrupt then people down the line also tend to follow the leader and it, therefore, becomes a norm and thus a difficult task to manage.

### Causes of Corruption

This section explores the respondent’s opinions on the causes of corruption in the country. While looking into the prevalence of corruption and its consequences it is of utmost importance to study its causes. The CPS 2007, reported that wants, needs, discriminatory & non-uniform application of laws and rules, lack of information and transparency on rules & procedures as the major causes of corruption. This study, in order to elicit a better understanding of the causes of corruption, a number of corruption causes were provided and the respondents were asked to identify the main causes of corruption in Bhutan. To this, respondents provided a wealth of different answers.

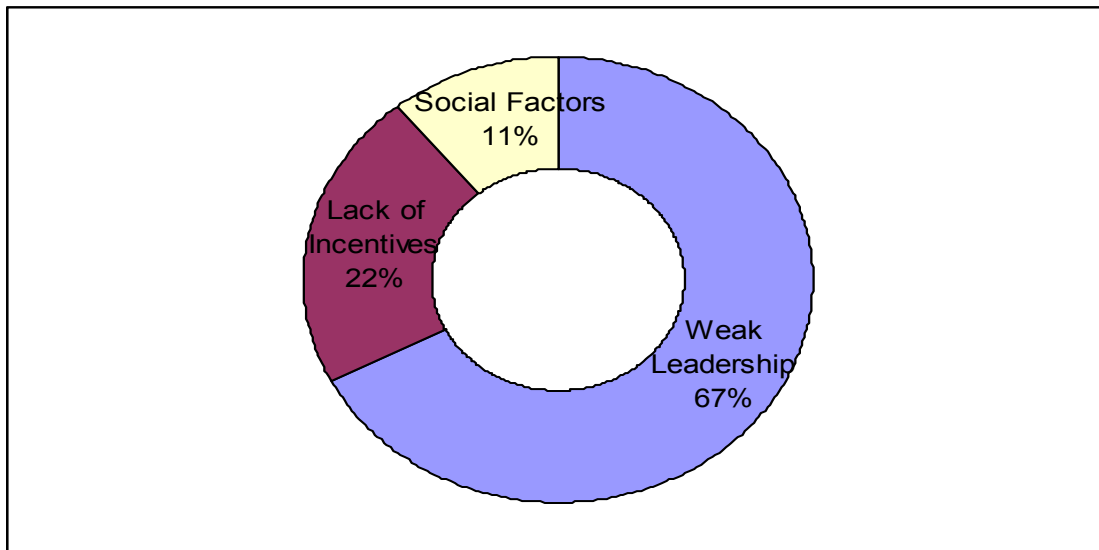
For the ease of analysis, the top six causes were taken into considerations and then came out with 16 different causes. The ranks of these corruption causes are purely based on the perception of the respondents. The number of respondents listing down the corruption causes decreased along with the ranking. Therefore we have the highest number of respondents indicating the number one causes and the lowest for the number six causes. Adding up all the number of respondents by the causes and the ranking and dividing it by the total sample size, lack of information features to be the most important cause of corruption (Table 1). Lack of information means lack of transparency too and it goes with the saying that “corruption thrives in the dark”. Transparency is therefore important to minimize the opportunities for corruption.

Table 2: Causes of corruption

| Corruption Causes             | Number of Respondents (n=332) |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | TOTAL | % of Total Respondents |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------|
|                               | 1 <sup>st</sup>               | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup> |       |                        |
| Inefficient service delivery  | 44                            | 23              | 24              | 22              | 12              | 7               | 132   | 40%                    |
| Lengthy procedure             | 40                            | 35              | 28              | 17              | 8               | 8               | 136   | 41%                    |
| Lack of information           | 55                            | 35              | 36              | 23              | 9               | 6               | 164   | 49%                    |
| Weak leadership               | 28                            | 29              | 24              | 19              | 10              | 9               | 119   | 36%                    |
| Non enforcement of rules      | 28                            | 20              | 23              | 18              | 22              | 7               | 118   | 36%                    |
| Poor accountability           | 21                            | 19              | 21              | 22              | 12              | 10              | 105   | 32%                    |
| Lack of incentives            | 25                            | 35              | 23              | 13              | 12              | 7               | 115   | 35%                    |
| Low salary                    | 10                            | 7               | 3               | 5               | 7               | 1               | 33    | 10%                    |
| Need for money                | 21                            | 20              | 20              | 12              | 13              | 13              | 99    | 30%                    |
| Lack of social ethics         | 4                             | 10              | 9               | 7               | 4               | 11              | 45    | 14%                    |
| Self centered                 | 16                            | 14              | 7               | 9               | 14              | 6               | 66    | 20%                    |
| Low cost of corruption        | 3                             | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 3     | 1%                     |
| Society tolerates corruption  | 1                             | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 1     | 0%                     |
| Low morale                    | 0                             | 2               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 2     | 1%                     |
| Degeneration of social values | 5                             | 2               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 7     | 2%                     |
| Small society                 | 1                             | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 1     | 0%                     |

## The Major Causes of Corruption

Though various causes of corruption have been cited down by the respondents, these causes have been clubbed under three broad categories: poor leadership; lack of incentives and social factors. Weak management and poor leadership featured as the major cause of corruption in the country with 68 percent followed by lack of incentives with 22 percent and social factors with 11 percent..



*Figure 7: Major causes of corruption*

Weak management and poor leadership lead to poor accountability, lack of information, inefficient service delivery, poor accountability, lengthy procedure and non-enforcement of rules. If a leader is strong and firm, corruption can be prevented at a much larger scale if not uprooted. Strong leadership can be equated with strong code of conduct and strong conduct means lesser or no corruption. Therefore, quality leadership is very important in fighting corruption. On making information readily available for all, the need to encourage all Bhutanese to develop a culture of participation in public policy formulation and implementation. It is generally believed that sharing information on government policies and programmes would deepen the quality of democracy and bring the government closer to the people, thereby making Gross National Happiness achievable.

Society's tolerance for corruption, low cost of corruption and degeneration of social values is also to be viewed seriously. The society perceives corruption to be normal and that every one does it and is not seen as a crime. Society, therefore, needs to be educated on the ill effects of corruption and the important role that people have in curbing corruption.

On the other hand, we cannot just ignore lack of incentives as another cause of corruption. In some cases but not all, a person resorts to corruption when the situation demands. Low salaries besides encouraging corruption can also have other detrimental effects on attitudes and performance of public servants. Low salary or the lack of incentives as a

cause of corruption also contributes to low morale, increased inefficiency, loss of self respect and dignity. It is also important to consider that rather than considering the matter from the corruption point of view, a more wide-ranging civil service reform programme, including adjusting salaries to cover the living expenses of an average family when inflationary expectations have been brought under control, would need to be given careful and serious attention (Myint, 2000).

Increased salary and incentives again does not necessarily mean decreasing the level of corruption if the government does not consider the macroeconomic policies. The government must make serious efforts in controlling inflationary pressures. Otherwise higher pay leading to higher prices and cost of living would mean no increase in the “real” wage of public employees and therefore no improvement in their welfare and thus lead to a deterioration of economic conditions for everyone. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to control inflation, restore macroeconomic stability, and address underlying causes for destabilizing speculative behaviour and to build confidence in the economy for the success of any reform measure (Myint, 2000).

### Personal Experiences of Corruption

Respondents were asked if they experienced any kind of corruption during the past 12 months. To this, only 23 percent experienced corruption while 75 percent did not report having experienced any sort of corruption. The sample size being dominated by public servants and students could be the determinant factor for a low percentage of people having experienced or being a victim of corruption.

Incidence of corruption varies among societies. The analysis by different occupational groups shows the farmers as the largest group having experienced corruption ( 29 percent) followed by business group with 27 percent (Figure 9).

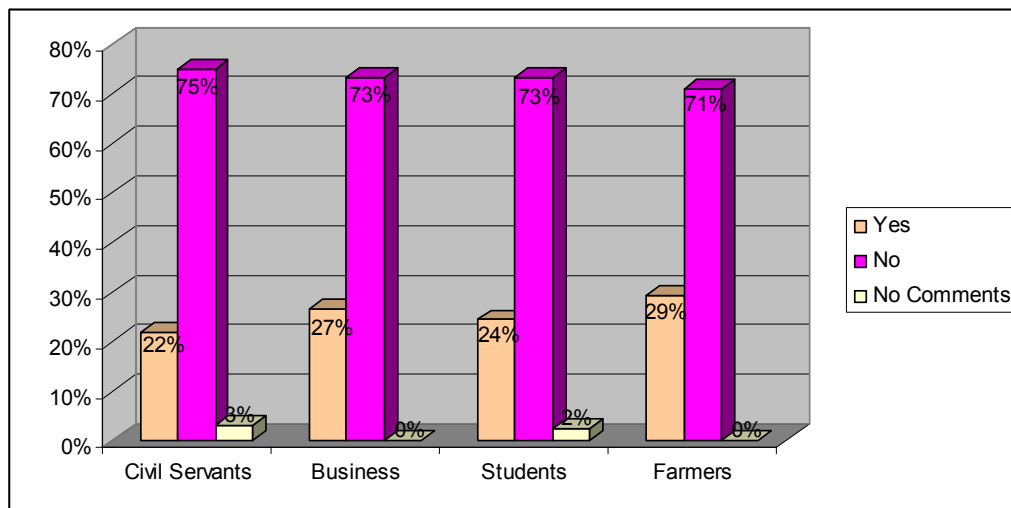


Figure 8: Personal experience of corruption by occupational groups

This in a way shows that farmers are most vulnerable to corruption. Few of the farmers who reported of having experienced corruption cited collection of money by the leaders of local government with no accountability and transparency in its usage, which confirms the complaints that the ACC receives.

### Effect of Corruption

Corrupt act undermines good governance, leads to misallocation of resources and harms the growth of the public and private sectors. Corruption is also the single greatest obstacle to economic and social development. It undermines development by compromising the rule of law and weakening the institutional foundations upon which economic growth depends. If there is a perception that corruption in a country is dire, and the cost of doing business has therefore escalated, that country will find its foreign and domestic investors shying away from further investing and doing business in the country. In this instance, economic expansion is stalled, competitiveness drops, income levels fall, jobs are lost and the people suffer (Malaysian Prime Minister, 2003)

During the survey, respondents were asked whether corruption would have any effect on their family life and social harmony. Majority of the respondents felt that corruption would affect different spheres of life. Based on the survey it can be seen clearly that majority of the respondents (61 percent) felt that corruption would affect their family life. On the economic environment, 59 percent felt that corruption would affect it. In general more than 50 percent of the respondents felt that corruption would definitely affect different spheres of life (Figure 9). Though it is encouraging to learn that majority of the respondents are well aware of the effects of corruption the society is also highly tolerant of corruption. As discussed earlier there is a strong need to educate and inform the society of its important role in curbing corruption.

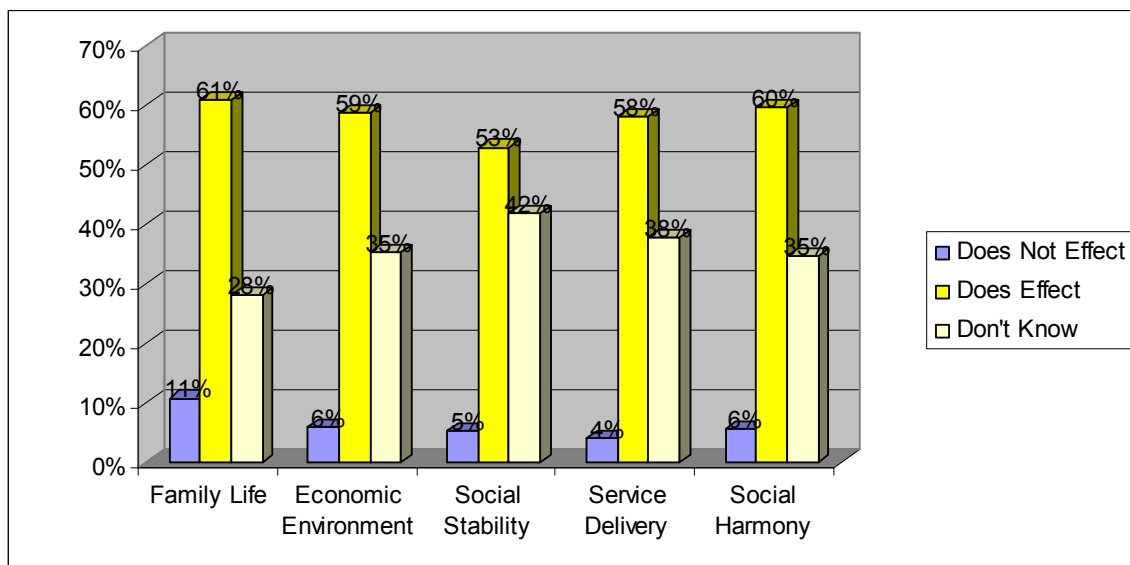


Figure 9: Corruption effects



## Willingness to report corruption

As per Article 8, Section 9 of the Constitution of Bhutan, it is the fundamental duty of every Bhutanese to uphold justice and act against corruption. Reporting corruption as and when it happens is therefore a fundamental duty. It is therefore very encouraging to note that a majority of the respondents (68%) said they would report corruption if they came across it while 26 percent were not very sure about it (Figure 10).

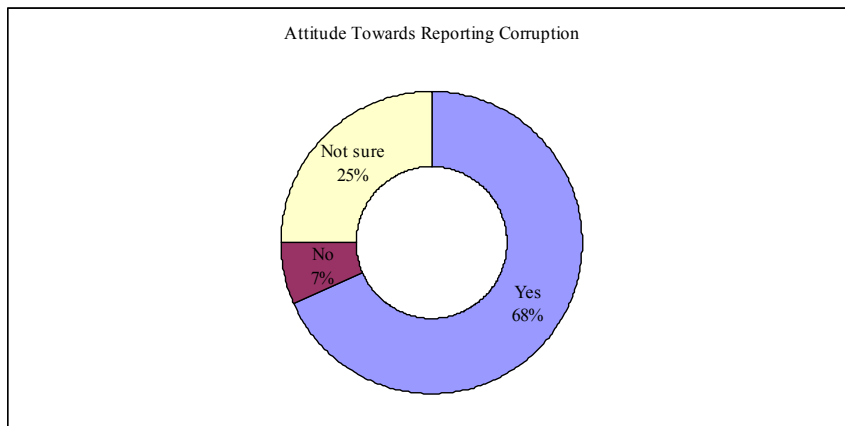


Figure 10: Willingness to report corruption

The attitude towards reporting corruption differs among different occupational groups. Though the farmers group reported to having the highest percent of people having experienced corruption, conversely this group has also the lowest percent in terms of willingness to report corruption. The civil servants group like the farmers also has the lowest percentage when it comes to reporting corruption with 63 percent. The major reasons as stated by the farmers are being afraid of the consequences and fear of being called as a witness. This in a way calls for a clear whistle blower and witness protection legislation. Students are more willing to report corruption with 80 percent of them coming forward to report it.

Table 3: Willingness to report corruption by occupational groups

| Occupational Groups    | Yes | No  | Not sure |
|------------------------|-----|-----|----------|
| Civil servants (n=196) | 63% | 8%  | 29%      |
| Business (n=30)        | 67% | 7%  | 27%      |
| Students (n=82)        | 84% | 1%  | 15%      |
| Farmers (n=24)         | 63% | 13% | 25%      |

On the positive side, it shows that students are more concerned about the consequences of corruption and that value education in schools is helping guide them towards the right path.

The likelihood of a respondent agreeing with the willingness to report corruption varied depending on age. People who have not mentioned their ages are least likely to report

corruption with only 46 percent of them willing to do so. The youngest and the oldest groups aged between 15 to 25 and 56 to 69 also have 69 percent and 67 percent respectively who are willing to report corruption. People aged between 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 are more willing to report corruption with 73 percent each while for the age group 41 to 56 there were 71 percent with this positive thinking.

### Reasons to report corruption

It is interesting to note the reasons as to why people are willing to report corruption. Various reasons have been provided by the respondents. Clubbing together the various reasons under similar headings, we came out with three major reasons, i.e. (i) responsibility of citizens to report corruption, (ii) changes would be made if corruption is reported and (iii) other reasons. Of the three reasons, 54 percent felt that changes would be brought about if corruption is reported followed by 44 percent who felt it as their responsibility to report corruption.

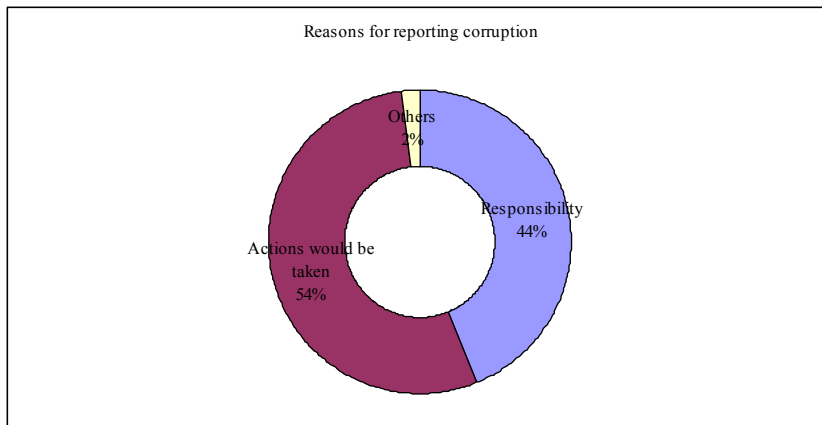


Figure 11: Major reasons for reporting corruption

### Reasons not to report corruption

On the other hand seven percent of the respondents were not willing to report corruption while 25 percent were not sure about it. The reasons for not willing to report corruption were valid with 43.5 percent afraid of the consequences such as fear of being called as a witness and being ostracized by the society.

Table 4: Reasons not to report corruption

| Reasons                                 | Percent Respondents (n=105) |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Not my responsibility                   | 8%                          |
| Afraid of consequences                  | 43.5%                       |
| No point as nothing useful will be done | 20%                         |
| Social grounds                          | 8%                          |
| Do not know where to report             | 2%                          |

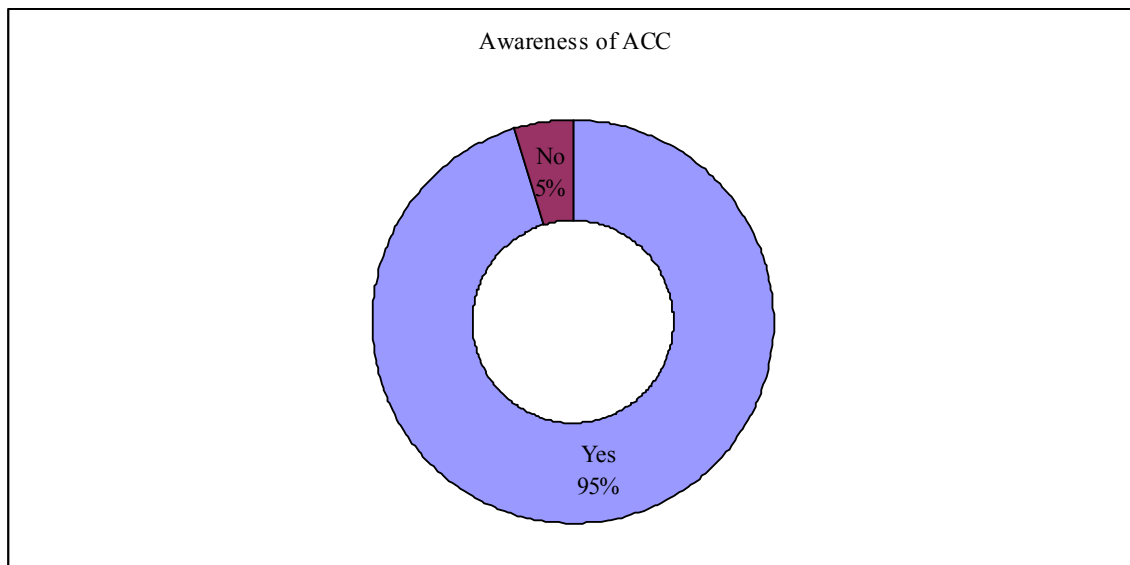
At the same time 20 percent of the respondents not willing to report corruption felt that nothing useful would be done even if they reported about it. The other reasons given by the respondents were based on social grounds and it not being their responsibility.

What the ACC should be very concerned and worried about is the consequences that people are afraid of. The ACC should come out with witness and whistle blower protection programme. At the same time people should be made aware of the provisions to encourage reporting corruption.

## **Awareness and Perceptions of ACC**

### **Awareness of ACC**

People are aware of ACC's existence and they have come to know about it mainly through the mass media. Most were aware of the ACC through television (28%), newspaper (26%), radio (12%) and website (8%). Some became aware of the ACC through the road shows and International Anti-Corruption Day while friends and relatives were also an important source of awareness of the ACC. The knowledge about its existence has created certain level of deterrence but that is not enough. Knowing of its existence alone is not enough but people should be able to avail the services of ACC and in order to do so citizens must know about its functions.



*Figure 12: Awareness of ACC*

### **Source of ACC's awareness**

As the survey was carried out in areas that have access to television, almost 69 percent of the respondents learnt about the ACC through TV followed by newspapers with 63 percent, radio (28 percent), friends and relatives (21 percent). Less than one percent of the respondents have heard about the ACC through the local leaders while in school only

around two percent of the respondents have heard about it through their teachers. It can, therefore, be said that mass media is the best tool in creating awareness.

Table 5: Sources of awareness

| Sources                           | TOTAL |        |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Television                        | 229   | 68.98% |
| Newspapers                        | 210   | 63.25% |
| Radio                             | 93    | 28.01% |
| Website                           | 66    | 19.88% |
| Newsletter                        | 51    | 15.36% |
| Road shows                        | 42    | 12.65% |
| International Anti-Corruption Day | 37    | 11.14% |
| Friends and Relatives             | 71    | 21.39% |
| Teachers                          | 6     | 1.81%  |
| Investigation                     | 5     | 1.51%  |
| Local Leaders                     | 1     | 0.30%  |
| Report                            | 0     | 0.00%  |
| ACC is the talk of the country    | 1     | 0.30%  |
| Official Notification             | 2     | 0.60%  |
| TOTAL                             | 814   |        |

### Functions of ACC

When asked about the functions of ACC, 28 percent of the respondents felt that investigation was the major function followed by identification of systemic flaws with 19 percent. There is also a misnomer amongst the respondents with regards to ACC's functions. About 17 percent of them felt that it was also the function of ACC to prosecute corrupt officials. While it is the primary duty of the ACC to carry out investigations, the prosecution is left to the Office of the Attorney General.

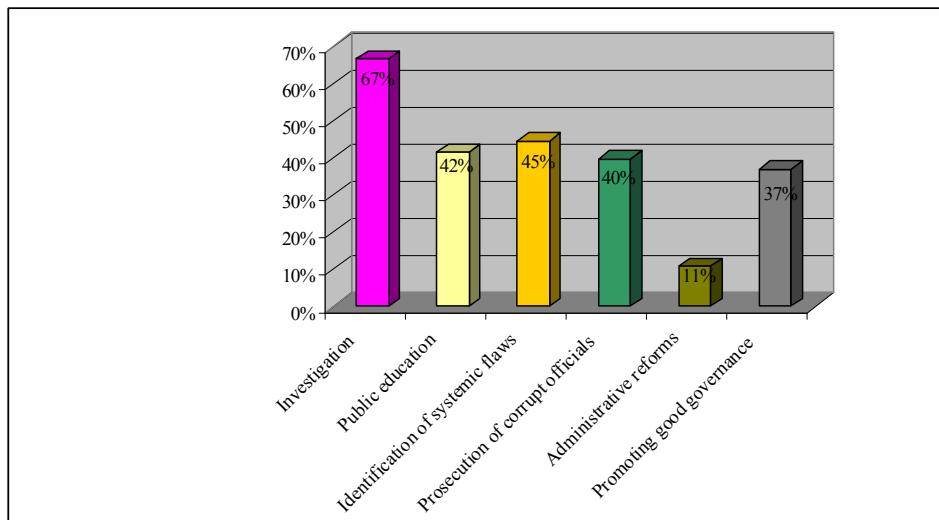


Figure 13: Functions of ACC as understood by the respondents

### Recommended functions of ACC

The respondents recommended that the ACC develop and put in place prevention strategies with 89 percent followed by investigation with 67 percent and public education with 55 percent (Figure 14).

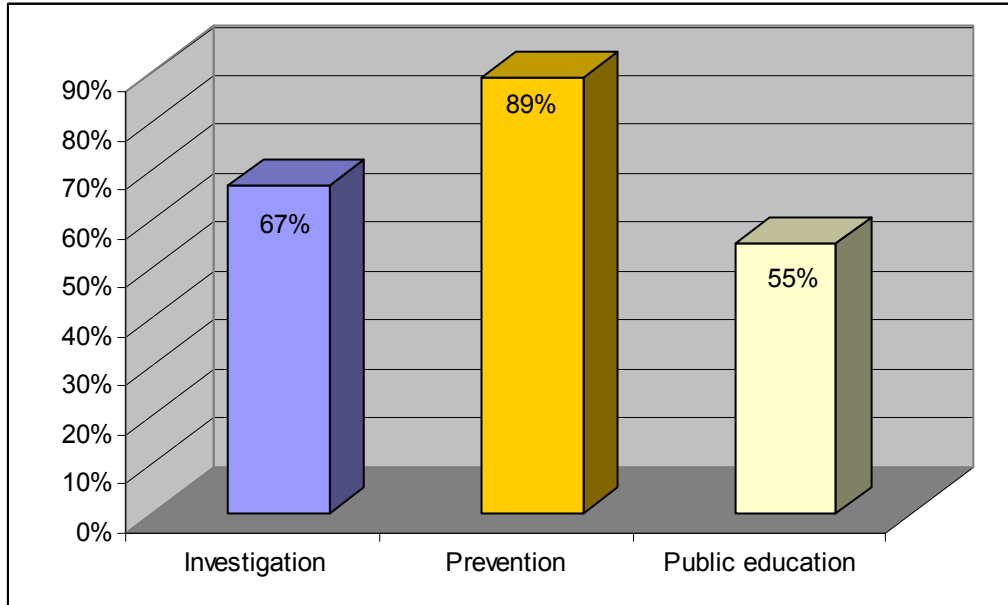


Figure 14: Functions of ACC as recommended by the respondents

### Assessment of ACC

#### ACC's effectiveness in the fight against corruption

Only 31 percent of the respondents felt ACC was effective in the fight against corruption while 53 percent felt that it was somewhat effective. Five percent felt it was totally ineffective.

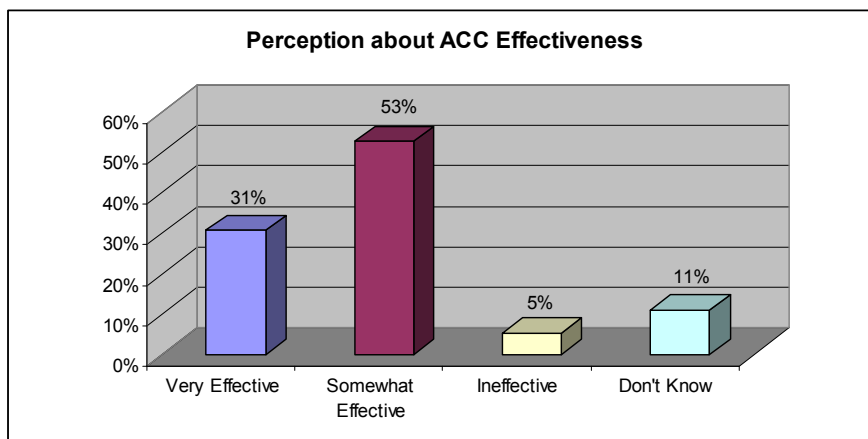


Figure 15: ACC as assessed by the respondents

The ACC should not be carried away with the fact that 31 percent respondents rated it as being effective in fighting corruption. It should rather be worried that more than 50 percent have rated it as somewhat effective and 11 percent who have no views. This shows that people are not fully confident in the ACC in fighting corruption. It is true that fighting corruption is not the sole job of ACC and requires the support of every citizen. Public education and awareness creation thus becomes very important to solicit the support of the general public.

What is more worrying is that only 19 percent (Table 6) of the public servants or the educated lot found ACC's fight against corruption effective. Some of the respondents have rated ACC as being effective in its fight that involved only the lowly ranked people while it has not been able to do anything to the rich and the powerful. This calls for the ACC to revisit its anti-corruption strategies and to make more sustainable.

Table 6: Effectiveness of ACC in fighting corruption by occupational groups.

| Occupational Groups | Very Effective | Somewhat Effective | Ineffective | Don't Know |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| Civil Servants      | 19%            | 63%                | 6%          | 11%        |
| Business            | 33%            | 40%                | 10%         | 17%        |
| Corporate Employees | 11%            | 67%                | 0%          | 22%        |
| Students            | 50%            | 40%                | 2%          | 7%         |
| Farmers             | 58%            | 25%                | 4%          | 13%        |

### Reasons for not being effective

Though 193 respondents have rated ACC as being somewhat effective or ineffective in fighting corruption, only 80 have provided reasons for it. The percentages are based on the total number of respondents who have rated ACC as being somewhat effective or ineffective and not based on the respondents who have only provided reasons. In most cases respondents have come out with multiple reasons. Therefore, based on the analysis, the lack of trained personnel in the ACC (15.03 percent) has come out as the main reason for its ineffectiveness followed by the lack of support from the government (13.47 percent). The other major reasons are ACC being biased to the rich and the powerful (6.22 percent), interference by high ranking officials (3.63 percent) and unjust ACC officials (3.11 percent). Interestingly these three can be linked together. If ever there is interference by high ranking officials and the ACC bows down to it then the investigation would be biased and would always go in favour of the rich and the powerful. These would definitely portray ACC's investigators as unjust. While people have such a conception about the investigators or the staff of ACC as a whole, it should strongly live and abide by its motto of fighting corruption without fear and favour. At the same time, it is important to create an environment of incorruptibleness in ACC and place extra measures to remain and live up to the highest ethical standard.

Table 7: Reasons for ACC being ineffective in fighting corruption

| <b>Reasons for Ineffectiveness</b>                         | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|----------------|
| Lack of trained personnel                                  | 15.03%         |
| Lack support from Government                               | 13.47%         |
| Biting more than what it can chew                          | 0.52%          |
| Weak OAG   | 1.55%          |
| Weak public education and lack of awareness                | 2.07%          |
| Lack of strong institutional support                       | 0.52%          |
| Lack of initiative by ACC                                  | 0.52%          |
| ACC being very lean to rich and powerful                   | 6.22%          |
| Lack of enforcement of law and order                       | 1.04%          |
| Lack of support from every citizen of Bhutan               | 1.55%          |
| Poor investigation and unjust ACC officials                | 3.11%          |
| Not willing to listen to complaints and to take criticisms | 1.55%          |
| Interference by high ranking officials                     | 3.63%          |
| ACC is a new organization                                  | 0.52%          |
| Lack of proof and evidence                                 | 1.04%          |
| Absence of framework for action and no clear mandates      | 1.04%          |
| Duplication of efforts with RAA                            | 0.52%          |
| Small society  | 0.52%          |
| No one to monitor ACC                                      | 0.52%          |

## **ACC Publications and Multi-media**

### **Publications**

ACC comes out with a yearly annual report, quarterly news letters and leaflets. The Public Education Division wanted to find out its reach to the masses and impact. The objective was to find out if people had read the ACC publications published so far and to use this information to plan future public education and awareness activities. In general, the survey revealed that there were more respondents who have not read any of the ACC publications than the number of people who have read it.

Interestingly, the ACC report had the highest number of readers. Either the respondents really did go through the ACC annual report or they must have misunderstood it and may have taken any other articles on ACC or by ACC as report. While bulletin and leaflets are supposed to target the largest number of readers as a means of creating awareness, the figures (Figure 16) indicating having not read shows that it has not been a grand success.

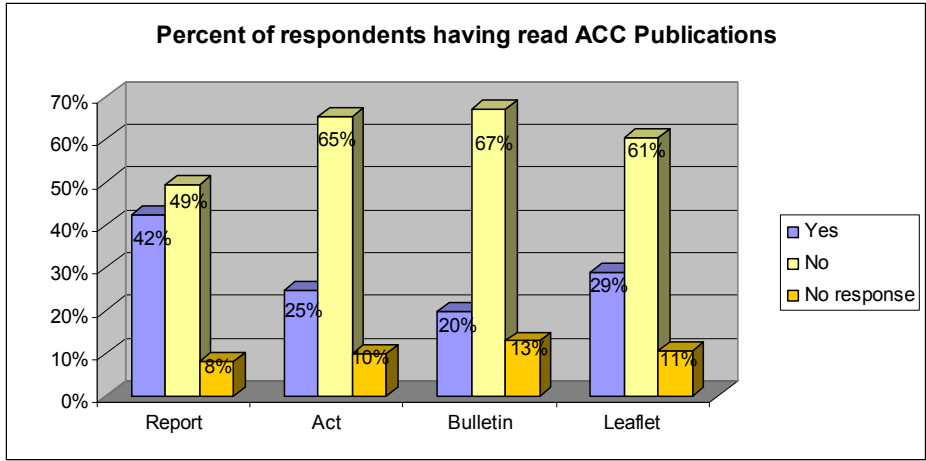


Figure 16: The reach of ACC's publications

Even when broken down into different occupational groups, ACC report is the most read of all the ACC publications. It has been read mostly by public servants (49 percent) followed by students with 44 percent. Likewise, the ACC Act has found its readers mostly in public servants (30 percent) and students (24 percent). Bulletin and leaflets have found very less readers as compared to ACC report and the ACC Act. On the other hand, none of the farmers representing the farmers have read ACC report, Act and leaflets. With majority of the population residing in rural areas, our bulletin and leaflets should also be published in Dzongkha and distributed to all the *Geogs*.

Table 8: Percentage of respondents having read ACC Publications by occupational groups

| Occupation         | Report | Act | Bulletin | Leaflets |
|--------------------|--------|-----|----------|----------|
| Public servants    | 49%    | 30% | 24%      | 41%      |
| Business community | 27%    | 13% | 7%       | 20%      |
| Students           | 44%    | 24% | 20%      | 11%      |
| Farmers            | 0%     | 0%  | 4%       | 0%       |

### TV Spots, Radio Jingles and Road Shows

The most effective multi media to create awareness has so far been the use of television followed by road shows. Approximately 75 percent of the respondents have watched the TV spots produced by ACC while 65 percent have witnessed the road shows carried out in 15 Dzongkhags in 2008. On the other hand, radio jingles also have been effective with 61 percent (Figure 17) of the respondents having heard the jingles.



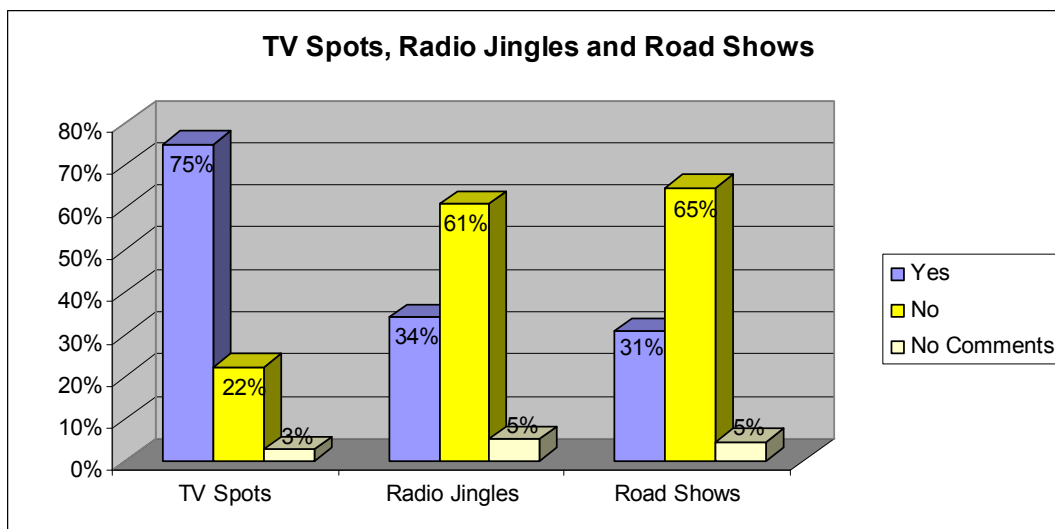


Figure 17: Reaching the mass through multi-media

### Lessons learnt from TV Spots

The TV spots, radio jingles and road shows were programmed in a way to prevent any possible corrupt activities during the first Parliamentary democratic elections. Therefore, these programmes were aired and carried out just before the elections.

From the TV spots the message that got across to the people the most was that giving and taking bribe is corruption (204 respondents) followed by making false promises (Table 8).

Table 9: Lessons from TV Spots

| Lessons Learnt                                      | Total Score | Percent Respondents |
|---|-------------|---------------------|
| Giving and taking bribe is corruption               | 204         | 61.45%              |
| Making false promises                               | 142         | 42.77%              |
| Using public funds for personal gains               | 4           | 1.20%               |
| Do not be corrupt                                   | 9           | 2.71%               |
| What constitutes corruption                         | 1           | 0.30%               |
| It is every ones responsibility to fight corruption | 1           | 0.30%               |
| Misuse of authority                                 | 1           | 0.30%               |
| Did not understand                                  | 5           | 1.51%               |

### Lessons from Radio Jingles

Only 113 respondents reported of listening to radio jingles and having learnt multiple lessons. The major lesson learnt from the radio jingles was to refrain from paying bribes followed by the importance of building a clean and corruption free democracy (Table 9).

Table 10: Lessons from Radio Jingles

| Lessons Learnt                       | Total Score |      |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Refrain from paying bribes           | 73          | 30%  |
| Report corruption                    | 46          | 19%  |
| Corruption is evil                   | 52          | 21%  |
| Building clean and vibrant democracy | 62          | 26%  |
| Coercion and collusion               | 10          | 4%   |
| TOTAL                                | 243         | 100% |

### Lessons from Road shows

A total of 102 respondents have witnessed the road shows. The message that they got from the road shows was the importance of building a just and vibrant democracy followed by political corruption being harmful to the society (Table 10).

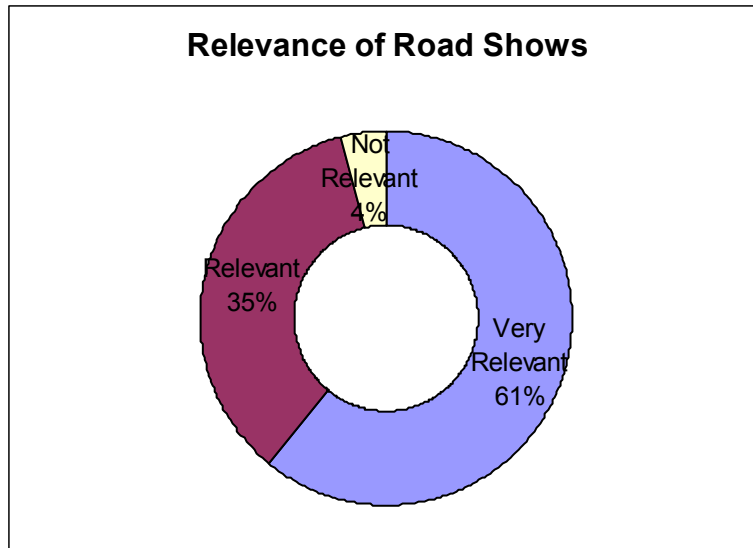
Table 11: Lessons from Road Shows

| Lessons Learnt                  | Total Score |         |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Political corruption is harmful | 49          | 32.45%  |
| Clean and vibrant democracy     | 66          | 43.71%  |
| Corruption can be rooted out    | 33          | 21.85%  |
| Did not understand the meaning  | 1           | 0.66%   |
| Others                          | 1           | 0.66%   |
| Corruption is contagious        | 1           | 0.66%   |
| TOTAL                           | 151         | 100.00% |

Based on the message that got across to the public it can be said that the multi-media programme of ACC has been successful.

### Relevance of road shows

Road shows were carried out in 15 Dzongkhags just before the parliamentary elections to show case to the general public that election should not be over come by political corruption, that corruption undermines democracy and is harmful to the society. When the respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the road show, 61 percent found it to be very relevant while 35 percent found it to be just relevant. On the contrary, four percent of the respondents who had watched the road show found it irrelevant.



*Figure 18: Relevance of the road shows*

### **Suggestions towards improving public education**

Respondents have come out with numerous suggestions to improve the awareness program to educate the masses. Though many of the suggestions were not related to public education, respondents have nevertheless come out with strong and valid suggestions. Some of the suggestions as pointed out by the respondents are as follows:

- Distribution of leaflets on different types of corruption and its consequences.
- More road shows to create awareness.
- Quote corrupt practices and the individuals involved in corruption in the media so that others are careful.
- Educating the mass on making complaints.
- More creative TV spots and radio jingles to be aired.
- Letting people know the disadvantages of corruption and the advantages of fighting it.
- Portray the effect of corruption through cartoons so that even farmers can understand it.
- Leaflets to be supplied to students, mass education of public.
- Regular awareness through newspapers.
- Awareness program to reach grass root level. Shows to portray all possible ranges of corruption.
- Conduct seminars and talk shows.
- Posters to educate farmers.
- Talking to Gups and local government officials on corruption and its effects.
- Presentation by ACC during DYT and GYT.
- Leaflets in Dzongkha to be distributed in the villages for people to understand.

- Chapter on corruption in civics and be taught in class ten. Moral lesson for students by teachers so that students develop zero tolerance to corruption.
- Set up convenient corruption reporting places in major towns.
- Use Election Commission's campaign board for campaigning against corruption.
- Create ACC column in newspaper; exhibition; posters & banner.
- Develop creative, practical and interesting public education program, e.g. Ap Naku series on TV.
- Organise musical shows with short skits in between - in places like clock tower.
- Make anti-corruption slogans in cartoon form and distribute to the public.

## **Recommendations**

Fighting corruption is a difficult and a challenging job, but must not be given up. Pessimists may say that corruption is not worth bothering about while the optimists view it differently and feel that corruption, if fought well, can bring about a clean society. Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations to fight and prevent corruption in the country are as follows:

- The first and the most important task for all citizens would be to teach morality at home like the teachers do it in schools. That's morality in the larger sense, the concept of right and wrong. Secondly, for behavioral changes there is a need to inculcate values, attitudes and behaviors based on the principles of integrity and justice. These are arguably the most important elements in the fight against corruption. Values and attitude are shaped by an individual's upbringing and his or her life experiences. In that sense, the fight against corruption is a long-term battle, and begins with the family unit.
- It is a Bhutanese tradition to hold leaders and those in high posts in high regard and esteem. Therefore, the leaders and senior bureaucrats must set a good example with respect to honesty, integrity and capacity for hard work. Fighting corruption may involve taking difficult decisions and the leaders must display firmness, political will and commitment to carry out the required reforms. The government's political will and policy of "Zero tolerance" towards corruption should not just remain as a will and policy on paper but must translate into a genuine demonstration of political will to fight corruption.
- Develop whistleblower and witness protection mechanism to guarantee the confidentiality of the whistleblower's identity and provides for employment protection to prevent discrimination or dismissal at the workplace. Both these mechanisms are to be enforced by means of disciplinary and penal provisions. The whistleblower, if possible, should be granted physical protection if the matter so requires. In addition to these passive incentives, financial reward system for whistleblowers should also be instituted.

- With majority of the respondents perceiving corruption as a major problem in the country, it is imperative that proper corruption prevention strategies and corruption fighting techniques be put in place.
- Favoritism and nepotism, together with patronage, self dealing and embezzlement are all related to misuse of authority. Misuse of authority on the other hand arises purely due to the presence of overall weak management and poor leadership. Leadership and management courses should be made compulsory for top managers and declaring the Conflict of Interest should be made compulsory for all types of procurement, employment, training and promotion. Appointments, promotions and trainings should also be made transparent so that favoritism can be minimized.
- Lack of incentives is one of the major causes of corruption especially amongst the lowly paid public servants. It is also important to consider that rather than considering the matter from the corruption point of view, a more wide-ranging civil service reform programme, including adjusting salaries to cover the living expenses of an average family when inflationary expectations have been brought under control, would need to be given a careful and serious attention.
- The government must make serious efforts in controlling inflationary pressures. Otherwise higher pay leading to higher prices and cost of living would mean no increase in the “real” wage of public employees and therefore no improvement in their welfare and thus lead to a deterioration of economic conditions for everyone. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to control inflation, restore macroeconomic stability, and address underlying causes for destabilizing speculative behavior and to build confidence in the economy for the success of any reform measure.
- Lack of trained personnel in ACC came out as a major set back. Majority of the staff presently working in the ACC were handpicked and do not have any formal training in the field of anti-corruption. Besides lacking trained personnel, ACC also has shortage of staff. While it is important to fully staff the ACC, it is also equally important to build the capacity so that the works performed can be of the highest quality.
- Lack of transparency or the lack of information featured as the major cause of corruption. Rules and regulations are required to maintain a fair sense of play; prevent conflicts; minimize socially undesirable consequences, etc. Therefore, for rules to be properly observed, they must be transparent, that is, must be set out clearly and made known. Another way of increasing transparency is e-governance or the use of internet to disseminate public information and to open up the bidding process in public tenders and privatizations.
- Discretionary power of the public servants should be decreased. It is the discretionary power that creates more opportunities for corruption. Instead of

discretionary powers, there should be more clear, precise and formal rules and regulatory requirements.

- The business organizations using bribes and other unethical means to secure contracts must be debarred from any future contract participation.
- Finally, it is honesty that remains as the best foundation on which to build an economy and a nation.

## **Conclusion**

The fight against corruption in a developing country for good governance is not an easy task. It was only in 2006 that the ACC was created and, therefore, the drive against corruption is recent. The fight against corruption should not be left to ACC alone; it is expected the government, citizens and other stakeholders be able to address the most difficult challenge – fighting corruption. Corruption is a tremendous deterrent to good governance and development, and its heaviest burden falls on the shoulders of the poor people. The Anti-Corruption Commission can only become effective with strong political backing. If Bhutan is to create a corruption free business friendly environment, and desires to become a country free of poverty and economically strong, where every citizen will enjoy his or her rights and a better quality life, ending corruption is crucial. It is the responsibility of every stakeholder to respond to this need towards corruption free, transparent, participatory good governance ensuring equity and social justice.

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