

## **Prevalence of Corrupt Political Practices**

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### **Abstract**

Corrupt political practices giving rise to underdevelopment and instability of political pursuits in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria was examined in this study. The study employed the descriptive survey design. Population of the study comprised all the people resident in the area. A questionnaire tagged "Corrupt Political Practices Inventory" (CPPI) was used in collecting data from 160 randomly selected respondents. Frequency counts and percentages were used in analyzing the generated data. The findings showed that corrupt political practices were responsible for insecurity and underdevelopment of the Local Government Area. The study also revealed that there was no Anti-Corruption Practices Commission in the Local Government Area, compounding the situation of insecurity of the peoples' lives. In view of these findings, it was recommended that adequate counselling services and enlightenment programmes should be made available in all the nooks and crannies of the Local Government Area.

**Key words:** corruption, politics, practices, Niger Delta, counselling

### **Introduction**

Corruption in the political scenario has become a colossus bestriding the Federal, State and Local Governments of Nigeria. This socio-political cankerworm, eating deep into the fabric of the political life of the people, especially during elections has become a cause for concern both in the lives of young and old Nigerians alike, and "Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria is not exempted. Some corrupt political practices such as political opponents using thugs against one another, assassination, maiming, intimidation, buying of votes, falsification of election results only to mention a few, which were alien practices some decades ago in Nigeria have become part of the people's political life.

The rate and level of political mal-practices especially in Delta State of Nigeria is quite alarming compared to other parts of the Country. Nigeria and her Local Government Areas which were supposed to be models to other Local Governments of other Countries of the world have suddenly turned to be one of the most corrupt countries in Africa, especially in political activities bothering on elections. The most worrisome dastard political practice is that of the gruesome killing of political

opponents, and there is no political electioneering season that does not witness this vicious circle. During these seasons, the judiciary is highly politicized and no truth is upheld by the courts of justice. The truth therefore is always trampled under the Persian carpets by our eminent jurists after taking bribes to cover the misdeeds of such partisan politicians.

Lamenting similar cases in Benue State of Nigeria, Olorunda (2007), observed that we profess that honesty and dedication is good, yet if one seems too dedicated to his duties, rather than gain admiration from fellow Nigerians; he gains condemnation and all too frequently reminded that “this is Nigeria.” Furthermore, in almost all Local Government Areas in Nigeria, everybody is learning to do things in the ‘Nigerian way’. The question that is often asked by them is “are you not a Nigerian?” This is another way of accepting the fact that Nigeria is infested with corrupt practices of bribery, kidnapping, killing, inhumanity of man to man, and so on. In this awful state of Nigeria’s political situation, most people are disenchanted with the way politicians involve in wicked acts just to be in position of authority. For example, it was observed that the situation of corrupt political practices in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State is on the increase in the twenty-five Local Government Areas of the state (Ajayi, 1998). Agere (2000) lamented the state of Nigeria’s political corruption among members of the Nigerian Society which is alarming in a country where the continual charge is to be honest and law abiding. In fact, corruption has reached its peak and except urgent efforts are made, Ethiope East Local Government Area and of course Nigeria may pay dearly for it. Moreover, because those at the top of the nation’s economic and socio-political strata with ignominy, pull down the qualitative socio-economic structure of Nigeria, guilds of militants in the Niger Delta Areas of Nigeria seized the opportunity to terrorize innocent citizens.

It is obvious from the foregoing therefore, that the perpetrators of corrupt political practices are guilty of white collar crimes and should be treated as criminals. No wonder Schaeter and Lamm (1998) opined that most of those white collar crimes are carried out by the expected responsible people in Nigeria, mostly politicians. Unfortunately, these white collar criminals are left to go unpunished while the crime committed by the less privileged are beamed daily. It is as if these politicians and the affluent class are immune to prosecution. It is against this backdrop that this research was embarked upon to identify corrupt political practices in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria. In addition, the effects of these obnoxious practices on the people was investigated with a view to suggesting counselling remediation towards the eradication of corrupt political practices in the Area.

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Although Delta State of Nigeria has twenty-five Local Government Areas, Ethiope East is noted to have the highest indices of corrupt political practices (Agere, 2000). These practices are shocking to the electorate in the area in particular and to the State in general. Many measures have been put in place by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to check these mal-practices to no avail. Hence, the main focus of this study was to identify these corrupt political practices, examine the effects on the people and posit possible counselling remediation to improve political stability in the area.

### **1.1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the types of corrupt political practices in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria. This study also examined its effects on the people, and to proffered some counselling strategies necessary for minimizing corrupt political practices in the area.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The following research questions were generated to guide the study:

1. What are the prevalent corrupt political practices in Ethiope East Local Government Area?

2. What are the factors promoting corrupt political practices?
3. What are the possible effects of these corrupt political practices on the people?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The research design for the study was the descriptive survey. This method was used so as to obtain information from a small sample of people whose opinion will represent those of the entire Local Government Area.

#### 2.1.1 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the people in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, who are between the ages of 30 to 50 years. A total of twelve secondary schools were randomly selected from twenty two secondary schools in Ethiope L.G.A. of Delta State, Nigeria. This comprised three schools from each of the four zones in the Local Government Area. The total population of teachers between the ages of thirty and fifty were two hundred and forty five, out of which a sample of participants were later selected.

#### 2.1.2 Sample

The sample comprised 160 participants between the ages of 30 and 50 years. The sample was obtained through a random sampling technique. Forty participants which represented 25% of the total sample were selected from each of the four Geo-political zones of Ethiope East Local Government Area as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Sample of participants

S/N	Geo- political Zone	N	%
1	Abraka	40	25
2	Agbon	40	25
3	Kokori	40	25
4	Ovu	40	25
		160	100

Table 1 shows that out of the total sample of 160 participants, 80 were males and 80 were females that is 25% males and 25% females from each Geo- political zone were selected for the study.

#### 2.1.3 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were categorized and were computed using simple percentages and frequency counts.

## 3. Results

The collected data are presented based on the research questions as follows:

### Research Question 1

What are the prevalent corrupt political practices in Ethiope East Local Government Area?

**Table 2:** Percentage Analysis of the Prevalent Corrupt Political Practices in Ethiopie East Local Government Area.

S/No	Item	F	%
1	Deprivation of qualified candidates	160	100
2	Imposition of candidates	160	100
3	Bribery	160	100
4	Intimidation	160	100
5	Falsification of results	160	100
6	Buying of votes	110	68.8
7	Denial of voting rights	140	87.5
8	Denial of election rights	100	62.5
9	Victimization	110	68.8
10	Election conducted by party politicians	110	68.8
11	Duplication of offices	90	56.1
12	Use of Army during election	70	43.8

From Table 2 above, the most corrupt political practices prevalent in the Local Government Area were deprivation of qualified candidates (100%), imposition of candidates (100%), bribery (100%), intimidation (100%) and falsification of results (100%).

## Research Question 2

What are the factors promoting corrupt political practices?

**Table 3:** Percentage Analysis of factors promoting corrupt political practices

S/N	Item	F	%
1	Craze for wealth	160	100
2	Government's refusal to punish corrupt leaders	160	100
3	Desire to remain in power	150	93.8
4	Use of thugs	90	56.3
5	Poor leadership	160	100
6	People's perception of leadership	120	75
7	Sadistic urges	32	20
8	Political parties' poor organization	45	28

Table 3 shows that craze for wealth (100%), government's refusal to punish corrupt leaders (100%) and poor leadership (100%), were the major factors promoting corrupt political practices in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State. Other factors include, desire to remain in power (93%), people's perception of leadership (75%) and the use of thugs (56.3%) while poor political parties organization (28.1%) and sadistic urges (20%) do not promote corrupt political practices in the Local Government Area as indicated by the respondents.

## Research Question 3

What are the possible effects of corrupt political practices on the people?

**Table 4:** Percentage Analysis of Effects of Corrupt Political Practices on the People

S/N	Item	F	%
1.	Political crisis	142	88.8
2.	Underdevelopment	136	85.0
3.	Government instability	130	81.3
4.	Poor Leadership	128	80.0
5.	Looting of public properties	124	77.6
6.	Insecurity of lives and properties	121	75.6
7.	Diversion of government funds to personal use	120	75.0
8.	Maiming and killing of political opponents	118	73.8

Table 4 shows that the effects of corrupt political crisis on the people include political crisis (88.8%); underdevelopment (85.0%); government instability (81.3%), poor leadership (80.0%) looting of public properties (77.5 %) insecurity of lives and properties (75.6%); diversion of government funds to personal use (75.0%) and killing of political opponents (73.8%).

#### 4. Discussion

The findings of this study as seen in Table 2 indicates that there were many corrupt political practices in the area identified by the respondents. These include imposition of candidates, bribery, deprivation of qualified candidates, intimidation and falsification of election results. These perturbing incidences were equally described by Olorunda (2007) in a similar study in Benue State of Nigeria.

In Table 3, factors promoting these corrupt political practices include craze for wealth, government's refusal to punish corrupt leaders and poor leadership as topping the list amongst others. Obviously, this shows that the judiciary is not independent and hardly brings to book erring political office holders even after looting public funds. This affirms the factor of bribery and corruption (Tukur, 2004). This is equally the opinion of Schaefer and Lamm (1998).

The effects of corrupt political practices in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State Nigeria, amongst others were pin pointed. These include political crisis, underdevelopment, government instability, poor leadership, looting of government properties and insecurity of lives and properties, only to mention but a few. According to Abubakar (2006), Nigeria as a third world country needs to refrain from such obnoxious political practices so as to move forward politically to meet the expected standard of world political mentors.

#### 5. Conclusion

It is evident from the foregoing that corrupt political practices abound in Ethiope East L.G.A. of Delta State, Nigeria. There is no gain saying the fact that the anti- corruption practices commission should wake up to its responsibilities without fear or favour. Obviously, political counselling and education is a paramount step to be undertaken to save lives and ensure developmental projects in this Local Government Area. This is why counselling units must be put in place to urgently carry out their duties of reformation of politicians, for a decent and better political life of the people.

#### 6. Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, it was suggested that counselling is necessary in order to correct the irrational behaviours of the people in terms of their social, political and emotional situations. Hence, counselling should be made compulsory for political office seekers in the area. Counsellors should apply the Rational Emotive Therapy Technique in helping the electorate and political

contestants imbibe the right attitude towards wealth so as to understand how their maladaptive behaviours can be replaced with rational thoughts that will enhance development in the area. This is because counselling enables political leaders to understand themselves first and others. In the same vein, Denga (2001) opined that all societies are psychological societies and thus require the services of counselling psychologists to fill the gap unabridged by other agencies of socialization. Some of the corrupt practices of political parties and their representatives, according to Agere (2000) is borne out of their irrational thinking and greed for wealth.

To enable this recommendation to be effective, the government is enjoined to open up counselling centres in the local and state government offices with qualified counselling psychologists who will from time to time embark on group guidance and counselling for political office holders in form of seminars and workshops (Khan, 1998). When these are put in place, the politicians will be helped to understand the need to adjust effectively to governance. This will equally give them the opportunity for self appraisal in areas of decision making and development.

Benedict (2000), opined that most of our politicians, if not all are illiterates. They need to be educated and sensitized on the ill-effects of corrupt political practices while in office. If this can be done, virtues like transparency, honesty, dedication, tolerance and accountability will be learnt and put in use by political office holders for the development of Nigeria (Attahiru & Mustapha, 2002). Other remediation according to Ayayi (1998) include abiding by the fear of God, democratic choice of candidates, independence of electoral commissions and quality leadership style by political office holders.

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