



BREAKING THE BARRIERS



**THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON THE MARGINALIZED GROUPS
WOMEN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
IN NANDI AND MOMBASA COUNTIES.**

ABOUT THIS POPULAR VERSION:

This popular version draws from the Impacts of Corruption on Marginalized Groups Women and People with Disabilities in Nandi and Mombasa Counties. Outlining ways in which corruption manifests, whom it directly or indirectly affects the most and how the already existing anti-corruption frameworks can be made more inclusive and sustainable responsive to the populace.

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WHY THE STUDY MATTERS WITHIN THE WIDER LENS OF EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Kenya ranks 130th out of 182 on the 2025 corruption perception index. Corruption perpetuates cycles of exclusion and oppression for women and other minority groups. Economically, women and persons with disabilities face high unemployment rates, an underrepresentation in economic empowerment programs, giving rise to poverty and dependency. Tokenism engagements as a result of corruption leads to the exclusion of women and people with disabilities undermining inclusive development, violate constitutional rights and perpetuate inequality. Despite supportive constitutional and legal policy frameworks, women, youth and persons with disabilities remain excluded from equitable service delivery, marginalized in decision-making and deprived in economic empowerment programs in Nandi County.

On the other hand, in Mombasa County women entrepreneurs face intensified corruption experiences which can hinder business growth and access to resources. In Kenya, there is limited data on the impact of corruption on marginalized groups which can inform advocacy initiatives and legal reforms. To address the problem, this research aimed to conduct evidence-based research to generate data that shall engage state and non-state actors in pushing for legal reforms; support outreach campaigns to raise awareness on forms of corruption which affect marginalised communities, whilst providing legal aid (including through TI-Kenya's Advocacy and Legal Aid Centers (ALACs))



Figure 1: The scale or levels of GESI initiatives. Source: Pederson, A., Greaves, L., and Poole, N. (2015)

Negative attitude from healthcare providers towards women with disability discourages them from seeking required reproductive services. Additionally, corruption contributes to the exacerbation of marginalization of women with disabilities from public participation limiting their awareness of available services and rights. The interplay between gender, disability and corruption aggravates existing inequalities limiting access to essential services and resources. By understanding corruption's role in perpetuating inequality, findings from this research will enable the creation of a more inclusive governance system that shall address the needs of the marginalized not only in Mombasa and Nandi Counties but the entire country at large.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To analyze how different forms of corruption inappropriately affects women and PWDs in Nandi and Mombasa Counties.
2. To analyze the social economic impacts of corruption on access to essential public services for women and PWDs in Nandi and Mombasa Counties
3. To identify gender responsive and disability inclusive strategies that can enhance and strengthen anti-corruption frameworks for marginalized groups – Women and PWDs

THE TARGET POPULATION : entailed the marginalized particularly the women, persons with disabilities (PWD), youth, and other vulnerable communities; being Kenyans of 18 years and above in the target constituencies of Mombasa and Nandi Counties. The target population was drawn from:

Table 1: Target Populations - Nandi and Mombasa Counties.

Constituency and county	
Engwen and Nandi Hills Constituency – Nandi County	Nandi Women Network, Nandi Civil Society, Nandi PWD network, National Council for persons with Disability Nandi Chapter, National Gender and Equality Commissioner, County Government of Nandi – Department of Gender and Social Development, County Commissioner
Mvita and Kisauni Constituencies – Mombasa County	Mombasa Women Network, Mombasa Civil Society, Mombasa PWD network, National Council for persons with Disability Mombasa Chapter, National Gender and Equality Commissioner, County Government of Mombasa – Department of Gender and Social Development, County Commissioner

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

For Nandi County a combination of snowballing, purposive and random sampling techniques were used.

The sampling size and the sampling technique were as follows:

Table 2: Sample Size and Sampling Techniques for Nandi County

Category	Sampling Technique	Sample Size
Nandi Women Network Group	Purposive Sampling	30
Nandi Civil Society	Random Sampling	20
Nandi PWD Network	Snowballing Sampling	20
National Council for Persons with Disability – Nandi Chapter	Purposive Sampling	2
National Gender and Equality Commissioner,	Purposive Sampling	2
County Government of Nandi Department of Gender and Social Development	Purposive Sampling	3
Assistant County Commissioner – Nandi	Purposive Sampling	1
Total		78

Mombasa County a combination of snowballing, purposive and random sampling technique was used as well. The sample size and the sampling technique were as follows:

Category	Sampling Technique	Sample Size
Mombasa Women Network Group	Purposive Sampling	25
Mombasa Civil Society	Random Sampling	15
Mombasa PWD Network	Snowballing Sampling	13
National Council for Persons with Disability Mombasa Chapter	Purposive Sampling	2
National Gender and Equality Commissioner,	Purposive Sampling	2
County Government of Mombasa – Depart- ment of Gender and Social Development	Purposive Sampling	3
Assistant County Commissioner – Mombasa	Purposive Sampling	1
Total		62

This study collected both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through questionnaires, key informant interviews and focus group discussions while the secondary data was collected through desk reviews of the existing data such as the proposal, baseline report, progress reports and any other relevant documents on the impact of corruption on the marginalized communities.

This study adhered to ethical guidelines and consideration at every stage. For the respondents, the research team paid attention to autonomy, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. For Informed Consent and confidentiality, the following measures were taken to secure informed consent of the respondents: explaining the objective of the research, the kind of information required and the intended use, and above all, providing reasons for choosing the respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Overall, the team ensured that all data is coded and stored safely with limited access. Further, the respondents were given opportunity to ask questions and be informed that they are free to stop the interview at any time without any consequences.

THE CURRENT SITUATION: STUDY FINDINGS

In relation to the study overall goal whereby this research - focused on the intersecting identities of the groups including gender, disability and socio-economic status. The study findings per county basis are as follows:

MOMBASA COUNTY:

In Mombasa County corruption transpires as a methodical and structured challenge compelling the socio-economic participation and livelihoods of the marginalized and vulnerable groups such as PWDs, women and youths, subverting inclusive sustainable development, structural social equity and eroding public trust in state institutions. The perceived levels of corruption were considered to be very high by the study respondents stipulating a widespread concern about the severity and magnitude of corruption in Mombasa County.

As echoed by an all PWD Focus group discussion:

“The situation is very bad in Mombasa such that it has become extremely difficult for a person with disabilities to set-up a business in Mombasa due to constant harassment from the county enforcement officers. Who are always demanding bribes for them to allocate you a space where you can set up your business. The magnitude of corruption has skyrocketed in this county from the police to the health and education services to social protection services, everybody is always demanding for a bribe, we can only hope that this will change someday”

Respondents Perceptions Of Corruption Level In Mombasa County

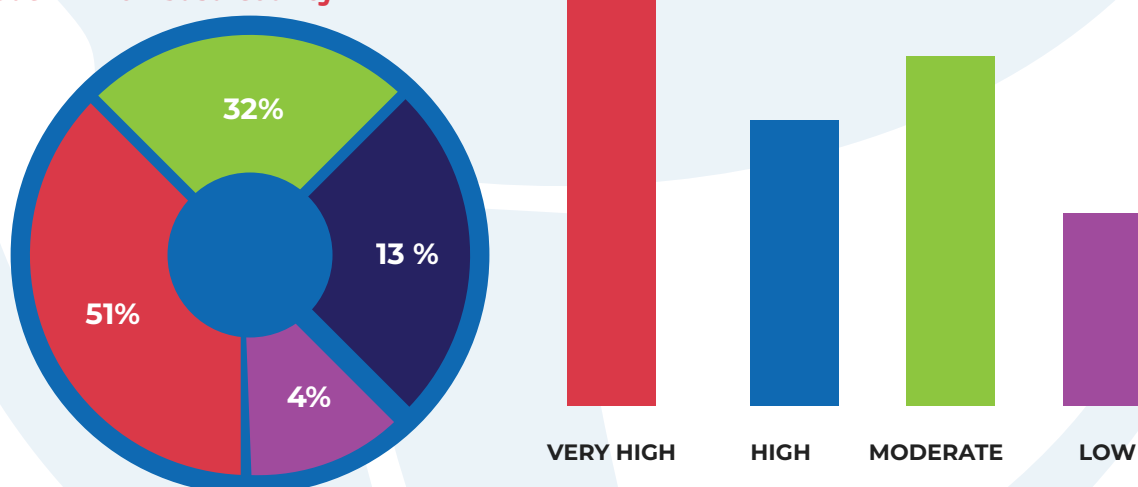


Figure 2: Respondents Perceptions of Corruption Level in Mombasa County

A majority of the respondents reported to having experienced or witnessed corruption (which manifested in terms of bribery) when seeking public services - health, education, social protection and community services, governance and public administration, water and sanitation, finance and revenue management, security and law enforcement services – in the last twelve months underscoring prevalent challenge that erodes public trust, weakens service delivery and efficiency inappropriately affecting vulnerable population – women, youths and persons with disabilities. Bribery was reported as the most experienced form of corruption,

with most of the respondents indicating to having experienced or witnessed bribery in the last 12 months when they sought public services.

IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON WOMEN - MOMBASA COUNTY.

Corruption has diverse negative impacts on women, youths and PWDs in Mombasa County. Findings from the study indicated that the impacts of corruption manifest themselves in women in the following ways:

- a. Gendered forms of corruption – women are unevenly affected by corruption compared to males through vices such as sexual corruption and extortion, mostly when they are seeking public services and opportunities such as school bursaries for their children and employment.
- b. Reduced access to essential public services – Demands for informal payments otherwise known as bribes in public hospitals or other public programs Reduced access to essential public services – Demands for informal payments otherwise known as bribes in public hospitals or other public programs limits women access to vital services and their benefits a phenomenon that negatively affects their welfare.
- c. Increased gender and social inequalities – Corruption amplifies the already existing patriarchal structures and social inequalities by hindering equal access to employment, business and leadership opportunities.

Sexual corruption emerged as the most common form through which corruption affects women differently from men in the community regarding access to public services.

As highlighted by one respondent:

“Personally, I have experienced this – sexual corruption - when I was following up on a bursary application for my child, after I refused to offer the favour, I never got the bursary but other people whom I know got the bursaries for their children.”

Underscoring the vulnerability that women face in regard to sexual exploitation when they are seeking public services. Corruption not only undermines service delivery, accountability and transparency but also underpins the existing gender inequalities mostly by exposing women to exclusions and other forms of exploitation when there are seeking public services.

IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON PWDs- MOMBASA COUNTY.

Findings from the study indicate that corruption affects PWDs in Mombasa County in the following ways:

- a. Delayed access to essential services – This was identified as the most experienced barrier that PWDs experienced. A majority of the respondents indicated that they often experience long waiting periods when seeking services, for instance healthcare services, assistive devices and disability registration. In most cases they are forced to pay for services in order for them to be attended to within the stipulated time.
- b. Denial and exclusion from public services and their benefits – Respondents reported that inability to pay bribes usually leads to disbaring from crucial benefits such as tax exemptions, grants that are restricted to PWDs, disability certification and cash transfer programs.

- c. Reduced human development opportunities – Embezzlement, misappropriation and diversion of funds which are meant for construction of accessible infrastructure such as ramps, purchasing of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, hearing aids and white canes and specialized learning materials such as braille’s deepens the already existing marginalization of PWDs. Limiting their access to education, social services, healthcare further exacerbates their marginalization and vulnerability.

Limited financial resources, lack of awareness of rights to report or seek justice for corruption related matters, fear of reporting and stigmatization were pinpointed as the biggest hurdles which make women and PWDs more vulnerable to corruption and its effects. Respondents suggested that these barriers can be sustainably addressed through strengthening awareness on rights and reporting mechanisms; improving accessibility of public services for women and PWDs; enforcing anti-corruption laws and accountability and providing financial support.

NANDI COUNTY:

In Nandi County corruption remains a chronic issue that is persistent across different sectors undermining effective service delivery, posing a serious governance concern, mostly to devolution. The perceived levels of corruption were considered to be high by the study respondents pointing out to the need to have reinforced stewardship and accountability in improving transparency and enhancing citizenry engagements.

As reflected by an all women Focus group discussion:

“Women are the highest population who normally visit the CDF offices for educational bursaries mostly on behalf of their children. Their Access to educational bursaries is hampered by a kickback scheme where CDF Officials demand a bribe from beneficiaries before the issuance of the bursary checks”

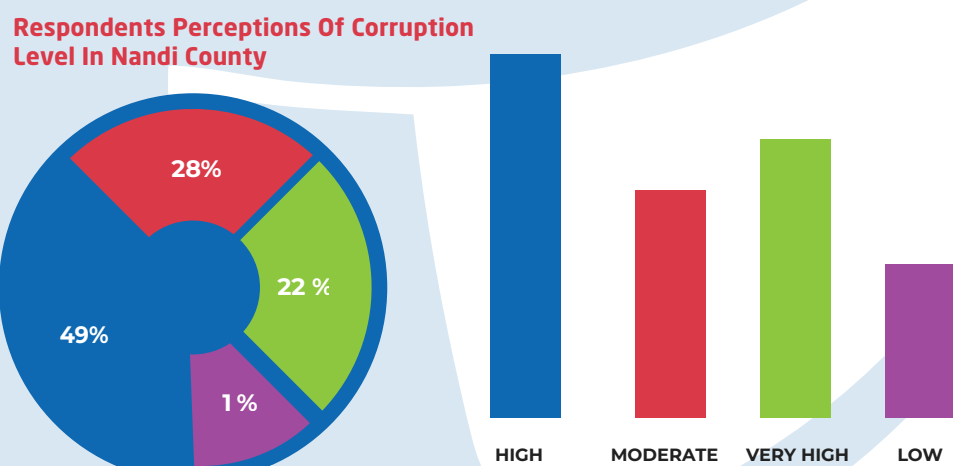


Figure 3: Respondents Perceptions of Corruption Level in Nandi County

A large proportion of the respondents reported to having experienced or witnessed corruption (reflected in bribery practices) when seeking public services - health, education, social protection and community services, governance and public administration, water and sanitation, finance and revenue management, security and law enforcement services – in the last twelve months. For instance, in the education sector some respondents reported to having been requested for “kitu kidogo” also known as bribe - by the institution in charge so as their children can get school admission. If one does not part with “Kitu kidogo” his/her child misses’ admission to that school even if they are qualified, an act that marginalizes the already vulnerable population even much more, curtailing the population development.

IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON WOMEN - NANDI COUNTY.

Corruption has multiple negative effects on women, youths and PWDs in Nandi County, more so in - leadership, employment, or business opportunities. In Nandi County the ramifications of corruption shows in the following ways:

- a. Denial of essential services – Women, predominantly widows who are from low-income households reported to having been denied services such as land related services (change of title deed after the passing on of the husband), as well as widow registration services – unless they pay a bribe to the people responsible for issuing these services. The denial of these essential services limits their ability to access government support programs such as women enterprise funds as well as limiting their ability to access land rights.
- b. Sexual corruption in exchange of opportunities – Some of the women respondents reported to having been asked for sexual favors in exchange for political endorsements and political campaign funds. Failure to comply to these requirements – sexual favors – they are denied political party endorsements along with political campaign funds.
- c. Kickbacks – Women groups in Nandi County receiving development grants such as NGAAF are reportedly mandated to return up to 50% of the received funds as illegal kickbacks narrowing the desired outcomes/ benefits of these empowerment programs.

Sexual corruption and bribery were identified as the types of corruption that most commonly affect Women – these findings are consistent with those reported by respondents of Mombasa County, illustrating a common dynamic that affects these two counties.

Some of the verbatims from respondents:

“Most women will be asked for sexual intercourse as exchange for campaign funds and endowments”

“In many instances of NGAAF grant issuance, Nandi County office officials demand a 50% kickback from women's groups. Once the women's group receives the full grant amount, they are required to immediately refund 50% of the funds to the colluding NGAAF official as an illegal payment.”

These findings underscore the segregated gendered nature of corruption practices that women face within our society structures – in line with sexual corruption – emphasizing on the need for a structured gendered approach in addressing corruption.

IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON PWDS - NANDI COUNTY.

Findings from the study indicate that corruption affects PWDs in Nandi County in the following ways:

- a. Denial of services – Respondents reported this vice as the most experienced most common phenomenon by PWDs when accessing/ seeking public services in Nandi County. Respondents reported to being denied services such as social protection programs – persons with severe disability cash transfer (PwSD-CT), and registration services -tax exemption registration services, if they failed to pay a bribe, an aspect that violates their rights and further marginalizes them.

- b. Delayed services – In most instances PWDs in Nandi County have experienced intentional delay of public services unless they pay a bribe to facilitate the process. A case in place is when seeking medical assessment report from a government registered facility – which is mandatory for the re-registration of PWDs.
- c. Embezzlement of resources – resources allocated for educational grants through scholarships meant for PWDs is resources... are usually siphoned by those mandated to safeguard these resources are diverted to “ghost students “accounts. Denying PWDs their right to education, hindering their human development index.

As these inequalities – delayed services, denied services, withholding of disability benefits – continue to exacerbate within our societal hierarchies, persons with disabilities continue to remain deeply marginalized with each passing day. A phenomenon that undermines their rights as stated in the constitution, constraining the ability to partake fully in the social and economic life in the community.

CONCLUSION

Corruption in Mombasa and Nandi counties is a systemic structural impediment to inclusive sustainable development unevenly affecting women, youths and persons with disabilities. While on one hand the negative impacts of corruption affect a majority of the populace, the repercussions are substantially harsher and more severe for the marginalized groups – women, PWDs and youth - mostly because of their limited financial capacities, their underrepresentation in the legislature, limited access to information, uneven social protection structures and the deep-rooted power imbalances that continue to fuel these vices.

Sexual corruption is one of the major gender specific forms of corruption that women face in these two counties – Mombasa and Nandi – denying them access to crucial public services such as health and education and economic opportunities. This gender-specific form of corruption violates women’s dignity and their human rights. Delay and denial of essential public services such as health and education were identified as the most common repercussions of corruption on persons with disability in Mombasa and Nandi counties, an occurrence that further amplifies their marginalization. These realities that women and persons with disabilities face subverts the commitment made and enshrined in the Kenyan constitution and The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025. Unstructured whistleblower protection frameworks, inaccessible online reporting systems and the fear of victimization continue to discourage corruption related reporting, allowing corruption to continue with impunity.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Below are the targeted recommendations to address the identified issues

a) To Development Partners

- Prioritize funding for anti-corruption programming activities that seek to integrate disability, social inclusion and gender with an expected outcome that will enhance and build institutional capacity for sustainable inclusive governance both at the national and county level.

b) The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

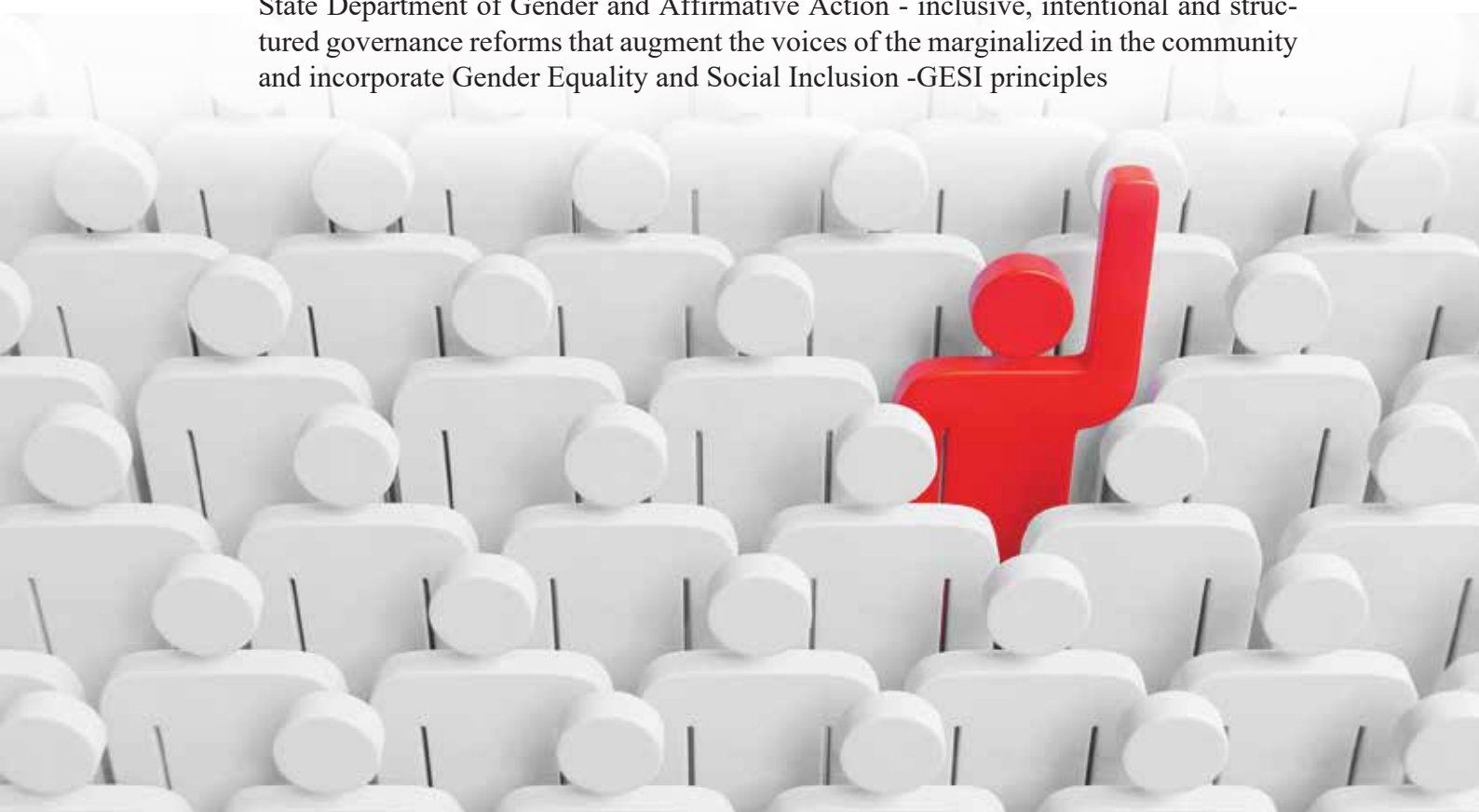
- Amplify community monitoring initiatives, civic education as well as legal aid clinics, capitalizing on these initiatives to sustainably empower PWDs, women and youths to enhance advocacy efforts on corruption and recognize and report corruption.
- Have in place Gender Equality and social inclusion frameworks that include each of the two counties – Mombasa and Nandi - having a stand – alone disability policy, that will mainstream programmes and activities that target disability inclusion

c) National Council for Persons with Disabilities

- Strengthen corruption reporting platforms by having dedicated complaints channels that are regularly monitored, anonymous, and easily accessible to populations –
- The National Council for Persons with Disabilities should be given leeway to elect their own representatives and leaders in a free, credible, transparent manner.

d) The National Government

- The National government through Parliament needs to expedite the enactment of the Whistleblower Protection Bill. This will ensure that both the marginalized and non-marginalized population groups will be protected against possible retaliation Through the State Department of Gender and Affirmative Action - inclusive, intentional and structured governance reforms that augment the voices of the marginalized in the community and incorporate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion -GESI principles





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