

Cover page

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Corruption in South Africa

South Africa is a beautiful and one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. It has been over a decade since South Africa has been declared a democratic country. Despite this ongoing celebration of liberation and diversity, South Africa faces a horrible pandemic which has ravaged people's lives, corruption.

Corruption is typically a misuse of power and position to get what you desire, often monetary and power gains. Corruption can take many form but the results are often equally devastating, especially for the innocent and the lower class. South Africans have a first hand experience of the effects of corruption especially in the government sector. We hear about it every time in the media and we see its effects in our daily lives, but the question is, is the government doing enough to combat it and what can we do as citizens to help fight against it? As much we know that corruption is common, only few cases are being reported as we see on the statistics by Business Tech, only 8% of bribery cases, 8% of nepotism and 12% of misuse of government funds have been reported in 2021. According to the South African Government website, only 30 arrests have been made and 4 convictions. So looking at these statistics the question still remains, is the government doing enough, are we doing enough as a society?

Corruption can take up many forms but the most common ones in our country and the ones that are going to be discussed are : bribery, nepotism, misuse of government funds .

Bribery is an act of illegal monetary or gift exchange often between two or more parties in order to gain favours. It happens in almost every where and unfortunately, it also happens in government sectors. This act is allegedly often used by politicians to gain power or to move up in higher positions. The most heard of case of bribery is the one done by traffic cops where they would stop suspicious vehicles in the roads and instead of them doing their job as protectors of the country, they ask for a bribe or a "cold drink" as commonly known. Not only is this act despicable but it seems like the society has gotten used to it and few cases have been reported about it. Bribery has unfortunately found its way to the job market, where promotions and job positions are not determined by qualifications but its about how deep your pockets are.

"Education is no longer a key to success but connections are." These are the words the majority of the job seeking youth would attest to. With unemployment rates always on the rise, one would wonder if education plays a role in bettering the lives of South Africans or it is a who knows who situation. Nepotism is when family members or close friends are given a job position in a company on a basis that they know the hiring manager or someone in a higher position. More often, these people are unqualified for the job position. Not only does this discourage people to be active in a job market, it also means inadequate job is being done by the unqualified person it the position, especially in the government sector . According to Strictly Classified, employees might be hiring less or unqualified individuals due to nepotism and that may lead to an organisation or a department

suffering. This shows that nepotism not only affects job seekers but also the company. It may also be the cause behind many companies failing.

Misuse of government resources is one of the worst types of corruption as it is the reason why many South Africans are suffering in poverty. It does not only affect the vulnerable but it also hinders the growth and development of a country. Misuse of government funds is when government officials or people entrusted with government funds to achieve a certain task misuse the funds for their own satisfaction. This is infuriating because many people suffer while others with a power to help are wasting the resources meant to help those in need. This also means that taxpayer's money is being thrown in a drain because it doesn't do what it was meant to do. According to (Davis, R 2018), " Van Schalkwyk estimates that over 98% of irregular expenditure of public funds in South Africa is not followed up in any meaningful way." There are a lot of cases dating back from years where government officials were accused of using funds for their own benefit. Some recent cases include misuse of funds meant for Covid 19 PPE tenders. We often see the misuse of funds in local municipalities where local communities don't have an access to basic needs, have improper infrastructure while local government officials are stinking rich. Misuse of funds can also have an impact on the education. Lack of educational resources and infrastructure means that more people are not having quality education and this can greatly impact their future.

Corruption is a challenge in South Africa because it is the number one contributor to poverty. The misuse of funds and high unemployment rates will often lead to high crime rates and low levels of quality education. Corruption also slows down the growth of the country and the growth of the economy. (Ofusori, A 2020) said that, " corruption has been linked to GDP, the higher the incidence of corruption in a country, the lower the level of GDP." Health care is also negatively affected by corruption in South Africa. A number of lives could have been saved if only people focused on being ethical rather than feeding their greed. Mostly in rural areas, there is a constant lack of medicine and clinics. This issue was even made worse by the Covid 19 pandemic. Lives were lost because hospitals and clinics did not have enough equipment to assist patients but Covid 19 PPE tenders were issued out. Without corruption, more rural areas were going to have access to clean water and more schools. Improperly or cheaply built infrastructures are a risk to South African lives. They can collapse anytime and kill countless lives and that shows that corrupt people lack empathy and worry only about themselves. Another thing that we might notice is that different forms of corruption can be interrelated for example there is a link between bribery and nepotism and also between bribery and misuse of funds. The reputation of a country is really important so if the country is known for corruption, this might discourage foreign investment in a country and thus limiting its possibilities of thriving. Inequality can also be the results of corruption. The rich may become richer while the poor become poorer. This will, of course, lead to many issues like increased teenage pregnancy, drug use and overall a decline in the mental health of those affected negatively by corruption.

There are ways in which corruption can be combated but it all starts with us as individuals. By refusing to partake in any type of corruption and by reporting possible corruption, we are doing an important part in our country. The government is also working tirelessly to fight against this by implementing acts and making sure to prosecute those involved in this heinous act. As mentioned in the South African website, the government has introduced initiatives like developing a National Anti Corruption Strategy which will focus on changing the behaviour of the society with an aim to decrease corruption and in the National Development Plan(2030) chapter 14, there are measures proposed to fighting corruption like placing a legislative framework to combat corruption. There are several organisations that aims at fighting corruption in South Africa. These organisations are:

- Hawks: Hawks is an investigation unit working with South African Police Service that deals with investigating serious crimes like corruption, especially in large corporations and government sectors. Hawks is famous for exposing criminals activities and we are all familiar with it. It has been operating from 2008 and its existence has proved to be vital in the country.
- Corruption watch: Corruption watch is a NPO that aims at fighting corruption and creating a society without corruption. It was founded in 2012 and it has since helped South Africans to come out and expose corruption in their societies.
- Chapter nine institutions: Chapter 9 institutions aims to protect human rights and democracy of the South African citizens. They include: - The public protector; The South African Human Right Commission; The Commission of Gender Equality; The Auditor General; The Independent Electoral Commission; An Independent Authority to Regulate Broadcasting and The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities

These are all the organisations that are aiming at fighting corruption. You can visit their website if you see a suspicious activity happening or you witness corruption, even victims of corruption are welcome to contact the above mentioned organisations. As a society we all have a responsibility to fight against corruption. We can be anonymous whistle-blowers and not in an internet age, we can expose corruption to a wider audience. There are also a lot other organisations dealing with corruption that are not covered here.

UFS and other universities could respond effectively in fighting corruption by encouraging transparency in things they do. They could also enforce measures and policies that ensures that everyone found participating in corruption activities will be dealt with accordingly. Education and awareness about corruption may be also the best approach. Making both staff and students aware about the impact of corruption how to respond to it will surely make a difference in combating corruption in universities. Ensuring protection and anonymity for witnesses and whistle-blowers of corruption will encourage people to confidently report cases of corruption

without fear. Also, universities must have strict anti-corruption guidelines that must be followed and respected by everyone in any position.

In conclusion, corruption is an ultimate nation killer. It has not only affected millions of lives but it also obstructs our country. Although there are organisations or measures that the government is taking to help combat corruption, it all starts with us as individuals to help fight against this. The fight for corruption may be far from over but it is possible if we stand together in unity to say no to corruption.

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