



Anti-Corruption and Environmental Laws in Liberia: The Need for Regulatory Reform

Sam Siryon

BA.LL. B Honors Apeejay Styra University school of Legal Studies

How to Cite this Article:

Siryon, S. (2026). Anti-Corruption and Environmental Laws in Liberia: The Need for Regulatory Reform. International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management, <i>02</i>(03).
<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i3.054>

License:

This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

© The Author(s). Published by International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management.



<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i3.054>

ABSTRACT

Liberia is confronted with significant challenges in enforcing environmental regulations due to endemic corruption within its natural resource sector. Despite significant efforts towards legal reforms post conflict, key legislation including the 2003 Environmental Protection and Management Law and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that provided a framework for sustainability. Despite these efforts, rampant corruption that is characterized by bribery, nepotism, and illicit collusion in mining and forestry which frequently undermines the very enforcement and implementation of these laws, thereby causing severe deforestation, biodiversity loss, and community poverty. There have been efforts made by the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) which was further boosted by the 2022 amendment that grant more autonomy, with the aim of combating this menace, the new 2022 LACC framework aims to strengthen prosecution and oversight, addressing past failures where high-profile cases often went unpunished. Furthermore, introducing the *2021 Whistleblower Act*¹ and *Witness Protection Act* seek to empower citizens to report environmental crimes and other abuses without fear of retaliation. Despite these measures, the rule of law remains weak, and a culture of impunity persists. Corruption in environmental governance is often perpetuated by weak institutional capacity, lack of political will, and the capture of regulatory processes by powerful actors. The interplay between environmental sustainability and economic development remains a critical challenge, requiring a sustained, corruption-free approach to managing natural wealth for future generations. This research finds that sustainable reform in anti-corruption laws requires Liberia moving beyond merely punitive measures to incorporate preventative, participatory, and transparent

mechanisms. It concludes that effective reforms must grant prosecutorial power to the LACC, strengthening the financial and functional independence of the judiciary, and integrating community-based management into environmental legislation to enhance accountability.

KEYWORDS

Corruption, Environmental Law, Rule of Law, Enforcement and Prosecution of Economic Crimes

¹ An Act to Protect Whistleblower to be Known as Whistleblower Act of 2021, Liberian Gazette 2022



INTRODUCTION

Corruption has profoundly eroded Liberia's progress by stifling economic growth, undermining democratic institutions, and perpetuating a culture of impunity that hampers post-war recovery. Despite the establishment of anti-corruption institutions, endemic corruption that ranges from bribery to nepotism has continue to plague the public sector, with the Country consistently ranking near bottom of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (as indicated in 2025 with 28/100². Rampant corruption has led to significant financial malpractices, including the mishandling of public funds, such as the 2019 Kroll Audit Report revealing that over 15 billion Liberian dollars could not be accounted for, contributing to high inflation. It has hindered development by diverting or allowing the misapplication of donor funds intended for critical infrastructure and Covid-19 relief. These corrupt practices have adversely weakened natural resource management where natural resources contracts, particularly in mining and forestry, have historically been married by fraud, with reports showing many contracts violated national laws. This has deprived the state of necessary revenue for development, as resources often benefit private individuals rather than the public. corruption has compromised essential services, including the education and health sectors, where bribery, absenteeism, personal aggrandizement, and nepotism are common, as shown during the 2014 Ebola epidemic wherein officials of government were bribed to falsify death certificates. The educational sector has been profoundly affected by corruption. In a nation striving to recover from decades of conflict, this systemic rot has turned institutions meant to empower into centers of exploitation. The most chilling effect is o the morale and motivation of students, particularly young women. When grades are sold, and academic merit is replaced by financial transactions, students lose the incentive to study or invest effort in learning. Reports on Monrovia found that nearly 98% of participants encountered corruption in education services, with 36% of students paying bribes for grades and 23% paying for exams. This atmosphere of extortion forces many students to drop out, thereby creating a cycle of illiteracy and poverty. Furthermore, sexual extortion that is often referred to as "sex for grades" has normalized a hostile environment for young women, robbing them of their dignity and education.

The corruption in Liberia's education sector is a major bottleneck to progress. It discourages genuine study, promotes mediocrity, and marginalizes the poor. Eradicating this menace requires strengthening the independence of ant-corruption bodies like the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), improving teacher salaries to reduce the need for extortion, and creating safe, confidential, and effective avenue for reporting corruption to break the culture of silence and restore integrity. Without this, the education sector will continue to fail, to produce the next generation of honest ad capable teachers. These are chilling effect which are profound obstacles to stability and prosperity. It creates a brutal cycle of poverty and distrust, requiring robust, anti-corruption mechanisms, such as effective prosecution and the promotion of a culture of integrity, to overcome it.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The goal of this study is to identify the chilling effect of corruption on development; including health, education and justice.

- To uncover the deep-rooted factors that promotes endemic corruption, institutional failure in prosecuting corruption, and inadequacy of legislation to prohibit and eradicate the widespread corruption,
- To provide an effective recommendation harmonizing existing frameworks, aimed at pursuing corruption in Liberia, and finally;
- To increase awareness in the general public regarding the corroding effect of corruption on essential services in Liberia.

RESEARCH QUERIES

² Liberia Makes Marginal Progress in 2025 CPI Report: Moves 1 Point Up the Ladder, Highlighting Need for Drastic Reforms to Significantly Improve Performance, CENTAL, Feb. 10, 2026

<https://cental.org.lr/index.php/documents/media-center/news/item/159-liberia-makes-marginal-progress-in-2025-cpi-report-moves-1-point-up-the-ladder-highlighting-need-for-drastic-reforms-to-significantly-improve-performance#:~:text=Ladies%20and%20gentlemen%20of%20the,address%20corruption%20in%20a%20country>.



This study seeks to provide amicable solutions and answers to the following queries;

1. What are key institutional bottlenecks within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and judiciary that prevent the effective enforcement of environmental laws?
2. How do bribery, nepotism, and political meddling specifically influence the granting of environmental permits and concession agreements in Liberia?
3. How can legal frameworks be restructured to strengthen community land rights and ensure that Community Development Agreements (CDAs) are not undermined by corruption?
4. What specific actionable reforms are most effective at reducing corruption in the natural resource sector?
5. How does the misallocation of resources that are meant for infrastructure and teacher training impact the quality of education in underserved areas?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This paper is descriptive and investigative in nature, the subject matter is a critical context for Liberian discourse and has had profound impact on public services in Liberia. This paper utilizes both primary and secondary sources for critical evaluation of the subject matter. The primary sources gathered are comprised of constitutional provisions, statutory legislations, international treaties, interviews, and relevant prominent judicial interpretations, whereas, the secondary sources implored are comprised of texts from reputable journals, national and international reports, articles, and blogs. The aim of utilizing these forms of qualitative data is to provide intellectual and academic discourse of the subject matter and to increase awareness on the decomposing effect of corruption in public services.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Moore Johnson's conclusion on Corruption Perceptions and Experiences among Residents in Monrovia, states that; "In the complex landscape of Monrovia's education sector, the issue of corruption emerges as a challenging adversary, casting a shadow over the aspirations of the young generation³". He examined the perceptions, experiences, contributing factors, and consequences of corruption wherein his investigation unveiled a compelling narrative of corruption's grip on education. In a sad turnout, the effect of corruption has adversely affected aspirations of many young people in Liberia, leading to a compromised system where young people cannot be lifted out of poverty, jobs are not provided on meritocracy but connections, and this weakens the potential of young people. The reliance on bribe for grades and promotion means that skills are not properly acquired, they are bought, and this leads to low-quality education and incompetent graduates. Students are forced to pay bribes to teachers or administrators to pass, intensifying financial hardships for poor households. When positions and passing grades are purchased, students who actually excel are disadvantaged, breaking the link between merit and success. When young people witness, or are forced to participate in corrupt activities to succeed, they may begin to view unethical behavior as necessary for advancement, and the inability to acquire genuine skills, combined with the psychological impact of a flawed system, contributes to high unemployment and political alienation among youth.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN LIBERIA: KEY INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

The Environmental Protection Agency in Liberia is significantly challenged and several factors prevent effective environmental law enforcement in Liberia stemming from a combination of weak capacity with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a slow and under-resourced judiciary, and systemic corruption. Despite having an established legal framework, including the *Environmental Protection and Management Law of 2003*⁴, enforcement is hampered by

³ Moore L. Johnson; The Education sector in Monrovia, Liberia: A Study on Corruption Perception and Experiences among Residents, International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology, Volume 8, Issue 11, Nov. 2023, Pg. 148 <https://ijisrt.com/assets/upload/files/IJISRT23NOV308.pdf>

⁴ Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia, 2003 (Republic of Liberia) April 30, 2003 <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/lbr53038.pdf>



these structured deficiencies. The EPA lacks the necessary infrastructure, laboratory facilities, and technologies to conduct timely, scientific monitoring or pollutants. This forces the agency to rely on hearsay or delayed inspections, particularly for air and water quality. Coupled with these are severe financial constraints, limiting its ability to deploy personnel to remote locations where illegal logging or mining occurs. Although there have been steps taken by the EPA to shut down companies like the China Union in 2024, there is a lack of consistent, transparent follow-up on whether penalties are paid or if environmental compliance is actually sustained.

There is a complete disconnect and lack of corporation between the EPA, Ministry of Mines and Energy, and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), which results in conflicting licenses and enforcement gaps. Environmental protection in Liberia relies on a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach involving the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), and the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME). Established by the Environmental Protection Act, 2003, the EPA is the principal authority responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and supervising all environmental activities, while the FDA and the MME operates as sectoral regulators within their respective domains. This framework ensures that natural resources extraction through logging and mining are aligned with national environmental laws through cooperative enforcement mechanisms.

COORDINATED INSTITUTIONAL ENFORCEMENT MECHANISM

The core of this partnership lies in the requirements for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAs) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before any commercial activity commences. The EPA acts as the central regulator, reviewing EIAs, issuing environmental permits, setting standards, and taking lead action in cases of violations, such as issuing fines or ordering shutdowns of operations that violate environmental laws. Furthermore, the MME regulates the mining sector, and the FDA oversees forestry. They ensure that companies have legal permits before operation begins, but with reliance on the EPA to conduct environmental compliance monitoring.

A typical coordination between these institutions is formalized through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and Joint Monitoring Teams. When violations occur, these agencies act in connect to enforce the Environmental Protection and Management Law (EPML) of Liberia. For instance, in case of mining pollution, the EPA, often in collaboration with the MME and the law enforcement, will issue Notices of Violation and, in several cases, shut down operations until environmental standards are met. Furthermore, in instances of cross-sectoral pollution, such as chemical spills in rivers, the EPA coordinates with various line ministries, including the MME and the Ministry of Agriculture, to assess damages and initiate remedial action. The coordination between the EPA, FDA, and the MME is crucial for ensuring that economic activities in Liberia don not compromise the environment. Through shared responsibilities, joint inspections, and the enforcement of the EPML, this partnership provides a structured, notwithstanding evolving mechanism to protect Liberia's natural resources.

2. EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR: MECHANISMS TO TACKLE CORRUPTION

The misallocation of resources intended for school infrastructure and teacher training is a primary driver of educational inequality in underserved areas. When funds meant for creating conducive environments and enhancing pedagogical skills are diverted or wasted, the resulting deficiencies like dilapidated buildings, lack of teaching materials, and underqualified staff, they create a compounding negative effect on educational quality. This mismanagement directly correlates with low students' performance, high dropout rates, and the perpetuation of intergenerational poverty. Infrastructure is a critical component of a learning environment. When resources for infrastructure are misallocated, schools in underserved areas are often left with unsafe or inadequate buildings, lacking essential facilities like clean drinking water, working toilets, electricity, and functional libraries. Education must not be mixed with politics, and opportunities should be given to every deserving Liberians to excel as they are competent to benefit from the nation's wealth. It is a constitutional mandate that



the resources of the nation should be directed to ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and facilities for all Liberians and that the mass education and elimination of illiteracy from the Liberian people should be a top priority⁵. Corruption has weakened the educational sector, leaving regulatory agencies to compromise on essential facilities that should serve as benchmarks, before issuing license for institutions to operate as Schools or Universities. These set benchmarks help ensure standardize educational facilities and quality educational services. The Ministry of Education in Liberia should provide a roadmap for the quality of infrastructures that should satisfy an educational institution, not any shack or shanty building should be permitted to operate as a School in Monrovia, they must meet certain infrastructural requirements before being licensed.

Firstly, setting infrastructural standards as licensing requirements will significantly improve quality educational services in Monrovia as they would typically ensure safe, conducive learning environments, boost student engagement, and motivate teachers. Proper facilities including lightning, ventilation, and sanitation directly enhance student's concentration, health and academic performance. Adequate and well-designed facilities, including sanitation, reduce absenteeism, directly improves student's performance and academic well-being coupled with high-quality infrastructure, such as modern, well-equipped classrooms, helps attract and retain qualified teachers by improving their work environment. These facilities are essential component of what constitutes quality educational services.

Furthermore, licensing requirements should consider not only population, but accessibility, and quality. In the context of accessibility in education, the structure or school building should be at a strategic location where people can have access, the location should be considered appropriate, access to roads, and most importantly, the availability of transport services should not be compromised. Transportation is an inclusive part of accessibility under education, the pillars of education under the SDGs No. 4 is; free, accessible, and quality educational services for all; when the relevant authorizing agencies mandate that proof of transport services are essential part of the license issuance, they are directly balancing their efforts to achieve the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No. 4*⁶ with the fight against archaic educational services that does not corresponds with 21st century realities. Coupled with transportation, the Ministry should consider promoting distancing learning as part of its efforts to achieving accessibility in education. Distance learning should not only be accepted, it must as well be promoted by the Ministry itself.

3. COMMUNITY LAND MANAGEMENT

IMPACT OF BRIBERY AND POLITICAL MEDDLING ON ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS AND CONCESSION AGREEMENTS

Bribery has been a primary mechanism for accelerating or sourcing favorable environmental permits in Liberia, with companies often paying bribes to officials to bypass legal, social, and environmental scrutiny, such as mandatory EIAs. This corruption is rampant in the logging and mining sectors, where bribes are paid to facilitate operations without proper documentation or to overlook regulatory violations. These financial transactions, which often include bribes to officials or financing for electoral campaigns, are used to secure lucrative concessions. Consequently, environmental oversight is compromised, and this results in significant ecological damage⁷. Political meddling and patronage systems are deeply embedded in Liberia's governance and play a major role in the allocation of natural resources. Political elites often use their influence to secure concessions for supporters, ensuring that environmental regulations are ignored. This interference can take the form of direct pressure on the regulatory agencies, such as the EPPA, to approve projects that would otherwise be rejected. In return, this exacerbates corruption, as officials are pressured to favor political allies over the long-term environmental interests of the country. The combined effect of these practices is the degradation of Liberia's natural

⁵ Constitution of Liberia 1986 (Art. 6) Republic of Liberia

⁶ Goal 4, United Nations; Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Last Visited Mar. 7, 2026 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

⁷ Transparency International: Corruption in logging Licenses and Concessions: Working Paper, Pg. 1 (03/2010) Last Visited Mar. 8, 2026

https://files.transparencycdn.org/images/2010_WP_LoggingConcessions_EN.pdf



resources, as companies are granted concessions without adequate safeguards or community consultation. The lack of accountability and oversight means that environmental violations are rarely prosecuted, and the public is left without legal remedy or recourse. This creates a cycle of corruption and degradation, which hinders sustainable development and undermines the country's environmental integrity. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in the concessions process allows for the misuse of natural resources, which can lead to social, economic, and political instability. The *Environmental Protection Act of 2003*⁸ has limited the Board (Environmental Protection Agency) to only regulatory, enforcement, and sanctioning powers, which contributes to easier bypassing of environmental justice other than transferring such cases as the situation may be, to the court for prosecution.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS AGREEMENTS ARE NOT UNDERMINED BY CORRUPTION

For Liberia's legal framework to strengthen community land rights and protect community development agreements from corruptions these existing frameworks must move from nominal to substantive implementation of the 2018 Land Rights Act, although it is a progressive, landmark law that recognizes customary ownership, endemic corruption in land administration where 87% of citizens believe wealthy individuals can bribe officials to register land, and this undermines the Land Rights Act's potential. The Land laws should formalize customary rights and ensure that anti-corruptions measures are implemented. Laws like the Land Rights Act must not be made merely because the legislature wants to pass them, they must be structured to streamline formalization and reduce the cost and technical barriers for communities. Although the Land Rights Act gives communities the right to define their own land as provided under *section 34.1*⁹ of the Act¹⁰, the process is expensive and complex. Reforms are to simplify the process for obtaining a "Certificate of Community Self-Identification" and subsequent deeds, making it a low-cost, efficient, and equitable process rather than a prohibitive one. The law should mandate the Community Land Development and Management Committees (CLDMCs) which manage land, are not just formed, but legally trained and empowered to negotiate. Laws should require that these specialized bodies are democratically elected and include mandatory, equal representation of women and youth. Historically the undocumented customary land was treated as "public land" thereby allowing untainted actions of government to sell it. We propose that the legal framework strictly enforce the 2018 Land Rights Act which treats customary land as private land and that government has little or no ability to easily reallocate it. These legal frameworks must require that all land registration involves participatory mapping, where community members, including women, define their own boundaries, reducing the likelihood of fraudulent, elite-driven land grabbing.

It has been established that CDAs which are agreements between communities and companies for development are often undermined by endemic corruption including nepotism, cronyism and political corruption being the main challenges as well as elite capture and bribery¹¹. For this, it is important to consider restructuring the legal framework to ensure transparency and accountability. Laws regarding CDAs like the existing LRA of 2018 should mandate free, Prior, and Informed consent (FPIC) before any concession is granted, as provided under *section 33.3*¹² of the Act. To fight against corruption, the legal framework must require that all CDAs are made public, with copies kept by the community, the Liberia Land Authority, and the Governance Commission. When consent is prior; the community may have sufficient time for negotiations and scrutiny on concessions and agreements, when it is free; the community members can have the autonomy to decide what part of their land should be sold or reallocated, and when the community is allowed to give informed consent, they might

⁸ Environmental Protection Agency Act of Liberia, 2003 (Liberia)

⁹ Liberia Land Rights Act, 2018 (Sect. 34.1) Legislature of the Republic of Liberia (2018)

¹⁰ Ms. Rachael Knight; Liberia's Land rights Victory Means the Work Has Just Begun; Land Blog Portal, Nov. 2, 2018 <https://landportal.org/blog-post/2021/02/land-rights-act-victory-liberia-means-work-has-just-begun>

¹¹ Kaunain Rahman, Liberia; Corruption and Anti-Corruption in the Areas of Environment, Climate Change and Rule of Law; CMI U4 Anti-Corruption resource Centre, Last Visited May 26, 2020 <https://www.u4.no/publications/liberia-in-the-areas-of-environment-climate-change-and-rule-of-law>

¹² Liberia Land Rights Act, 2018 (Sec. 33.3) Legislature of the Republic of Liberia (2018)



have negotiated, scrutinized, and are fully aware of the pros and cons of the agreements, in that way, the reallocation process becomes fully community self-governed. The law should require that before a CDA is signed and entered into, it must be ratified by a super-majority” vote of the community, not just signed by a few leaders, this process ensures that bad-faith agreements are curbed and protects the community from mala-fide partners, and after these CDAs have been signed and ratified, they become legally binding and must be transferred to the Anti-Corruption Commission and the General Auditing Commission to monitor for bribery or corruption or nepotism in the allocations of benefits. Legislations should provide funding for independent legal assistance for communities during negotiations, this ensures that they are not forced into unfavorable, coerced, or corrupt agreements.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PROCEDURAL REFORMS

The Liberia Land Authority is mandated to develop, implement, and coordinate policies for land governance, administration, and management in Liberia. Established by an Act of Legislature in 2016 as *Liberia Land Authority Act of 2016*¹³, it serves as a one-stop-shop for land matters, managing public land, conducting surveys, and registering land rights. The Liberia Land Authority needs greater capacity in rural areas to handle land registration, reducing the need for rural residents to travel to Monrovia to pay bribes to officials. It is equally important to consider creating local anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) focused on monitoring land and resource concessions at the county level which can reduce the impunity of local officials. The legal system must stop treating land corruption as a minor offense, and instead criminalize, through the LACC, the embezzlement of community benefits. By empowering communities to legally own their land and forcing, through law, a more transparent negotiation process, the legal framework in Liberia can prevent corruption from destroying the livelihoods of its people.

4. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Reducing corruption in the natural resource sector requires moving beyond general anti-corruption rhetoric to implementing targeted, evidence-based reforms that address specific vulnerabilities in the value chain. The most effective reforms focus on transparency, accountability, and the use of technology to limit discretionary power. Companies must be required to disclose the ultimate human beneficiaries and not corporate entities that own or control, mining, oil, and gas licenses. This help prevents politically exposed persons (POEPS) from hiding behind shell companies to secure contracts corruptly¹⁴. For instance; taking into account how Ghana used BO data to revoke mining rights held by directors with criminal convictions. The Government should establish publicly accessible, machine-readable, and interoperable beneficial ownership registers. The government should also ensure that all contracts, licenses, and sub-agreements between governments and resource companies are publicly disclosed, including fiscal and tax terms. This allows civil society and auditors to identify unfavorable “sweetheart” deals that often hides bribes, such as in the oil-for-product swaps in Nigeria.

Additionally, the government should consider digitalizing licensing and procurement by implementing online, open-data portals for the entire concessioning and licensing process, this will replace the discretionary, face-to-face negotiations with transparent, automated digital systems that can significantly reduce opportunities for bribery and extortion. This could be implemented by adopting open contract standards that allows real-time tracking of license awards and subcontracting.

¹³ Liberia Land Authority Act, 2016 (Legislature of the Republic of Liberia) 2016

¹⁴ Nyasha Vera: EiT; Looking Back, Moving Forward: Taking Action for Accountability in Natural Resource Governance, Reducing Risks and Supporting Revenue Generation, Jun. 20, 2024
<https://eiti.org/blog-post/looking-back-moving-forward-taking-action-accountability-natural-resource-governance#:~:text=Beneficial%20ownership%20information%20helps%20prevent,economies%20in%20resource%20rich%20countries>.



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS IN LIBERIA AND INDIA

In India, corruption is primarily prevented and prosecuted through the *Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA)*¹⁵ which serves as the core legislation that was recently updated in 2018 to include bribe-giving as a distinct offence and introduced corporate liability. And the same is investigated and prevented in Liberia through the *Liberia Anti-Corruption Act, 2008*¹⁶. While both countries lack the political will to prosecute these cases due to “big fish” concepts, the Indian law is more likely to create deterrence against corporate bribery, whereas, the Liberian law struggles with the culture of patronage. India’s PCA is more modern and expansive, that it covers corporate/private sector liability and “influence peddling”. Liberia’s 2008 Act was primarily focused on public sector corruption, although it now covers both sectors, but it has less focus on private, commercial organization culpability. The PCA in India is more technically comprehensive and aligned with global standards, but *section 17A*¹⁷ severely limits its immediate, practical impact, whereas, the LACC Act 2008 has been hindered by a weak judicial system and lack of enforcement capacity.

SUPPORTING LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS FOR ENFORCEMENT, INVESTIGATIVE, AND PROSECUTORIAL POWERS

India’s fight against corruption is enhanced by supporting legislative frameworks including the *Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)*¹⁸ which target the “proceeds of crime” and allows for the attachment of properties derived from corrupt activities. Additionally, these are supported by the *Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013*¹⁹ which established an independent anti-corruption ombudsman at both Central and State levels of the Country. Conversely, Liberia’s fight against corruption is basically supported by the *1986 Constitution of Liberia*²⁰ itself which contains provisions regarding the judiciary. Agencies Enforcing, investigating, and Punishing corruption in India includes; the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) whereas, in Liberia corruption is only investigated through the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC). Mechanisms utilized to pursue assets stolen through corrupt activities includes the establishment of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in India which handles the PMLA cases, whereas, in Liberia, limited focus is placed on “illicit enrichment” recovery only.

Whistleblower Protection: In India, the *Whistle Blowers Act, 2014*²¹ protects civilian from being targeted for reporting corrupt practices against high-profile individuals, whereas in Liberia there is no robust, institutionalized protection mechanism.

Judicial Capacity: there are specialized Courts for Prevention of Corruption cases in India under the PCA with mandatory 2-year trial timelines, whereas, Liberia currently struggles with low investigator-to-case ratios and funding. India has introduced “adequate procedures” as a valid defense for companies to avoid liability if they can prove robust compliance. Liberia’s framework focuses more heavily on the public sector and is currently battling systemic “petty corruption” driven by low public-sector salaries.

RESEARCH DISCOVERY

Through a longitudinal analysis of corruption as an endemic social problem, our research identified a previously unobserved correlation between the enforcement mechanisms of the LACC, GAC, and the Liberia Land Authority in promoting transparency and accountability in the utilization of public entrusted resources. Divergent to suggestions that these agencies are separate and distinct, our data indicates that both are separate but interconnected when it relates to managing public resources by government officials. This discovery is significant because it provides a clear picture of the trigger-down effect

¹⁵ The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (Act No. 49 of 1988) Acts of Parliament, 1988 (India)

¹⁶ Act to Establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, 2008 (Republic of Liberia)

¹⁷ Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002 (sect. 17A), (Act No. 15 of 2003) Acts of Parliament, 2003 (India)

¹⁸ Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002, (Act No. 15 of 2003) Acts of Parliament, 2003 (India)

¹⁹ The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 (Act No. 1 of 2014) Parliament of India

²⁰ Const. of Liberia 1986 (Republic of Liberia)

²¹ Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2011, (Act No. 17 of 2014) Acts of Parliament, 2014 (India)



of corruption on the growth and development of Liberia and challenges the long-standing assumption that the above agencies are distinct from one another. This Research investigates the intersection of anti-corruption mechanisms and environmental governance in Liberia, revealing a critical gap between policy design and enforcement. Findings indicate that weak, non-transparent management of natural resources, particularly in forestry and mining, drives corruptions. The study highlights that strengthening accountability in these sectors is essential to preventing, rather than accelerating, environmental degradation. This study found that while legal frameworks exist, weak oversight, impunity, and limited capacity hamper the effectiveness of the anti-corruption bodies like the LACC. Corruption thrives in extractive industries like the mining and forestry where opaque concessions and poor, weak coordination facilitate illegal, unreported, or unregulated activities. Effective reforms require increased transparency in public procurement, whistleblower protections, and active civic engagement to ensure environmental sustainability.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Revolutionizing the legal frameworks for anti-corruption and environmental protection in Liberia requires a shift from policy formulation to rigorous enforcement, especially when compared to India's more established, even though still challenged, statutory systems. The Liberia Anti-corruption commission should be given full prosecutorial independence by amending the LACC Act and removing the 90-day waiting period for the Ministry of Justice to act, as compared to the Enforcement Directorate in India. Relative to environmental protection reforms, Liberia should integrate the "Polluter Pays" and the "Precautionary Principles" into common law by amending primary environmental laws like the EPML 2002 to codify these principles and make them legally binding for corporate violators rather than just judicial guidelines. Environmental laws should provide legal mandate for a fixed percentage of natural resource extraction royalties to be ring-fenced for the Environmental Protection Authority's funding, this ensures that the EPA is not financially beholden to the executive branch.

To secure a prosperous future for Liberia's youth, the reformation of anti-corruption and environmental laws must transition from symbolic compliance to institutional grit. Corruption and environmental degradation are not isolated issues; they are dual thieves of the next generation's inheritance. When public funds are diverted and natural resources are exploited without oversight, the youth lose both the educational infrastructure required for growth and the ecological foundation required for health. Liberia must move toward the institutional autonomy seen in India's specialized judicial bodies. This requires the immediate depoliticization of the LACC and the EPA, granting them the financial and prosecutorial independence to hold high-level officials and multinational corporations accountable. Furthermore, environmental protection must be viewed through the lens of intergenerational equity. By codifying the "Polluter Pays" principle and ensuring that resource royalties are transparently reinvested into youth-centric development, Liberia can transform its natural wealth from a source of conflict into a sustainable national trust. For the Liberian youth to thrive, the law must stop being a shield for the elite and start being a sword for the public interest. A reformed legal framework is the only way to ensure that "The Love of Liberty" includes the right to a clean environment and an honest government.



REFERENCES

1. Liberia Makes Marginal Progress in 2025 CPI Report: Moves 1 Point Up the Ladder, Highlighting Need for Drastic Reforms to Significantly Improve Performance, CENTAL, Feb. 10, 2026
<https://cental.org.lr/index.php/documents/media-center/news/item/159-liberia-makes-marginal-progress-in-2025-cpi-report-moves-1-point-up-the-ladder-highlighting-need-for-drastic-reforms-to-significantly-improve-performance#:~:text=Ladies%20and%20gentlemen%20of%20the.address%20corruption%20in%20a%20country>.
2. Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2011, (Act No. 17 o 2014) Acts of Parliament, 2014 (India)
3. Nyasha Vera; EiT; Looking Back, Moving Forward: Taking Action for Accountability in Natural Resource Governance, Reducing Risks and Supporting Revenue Generation, Jun. 20, 2024
<https://eiti.org/blog-post/looking-back-moving-forward-taking-action-accountability-natural-resource-governance#:~:text=Beneficial%20ownership%20information%20helps%20prevent,economies%20in%20resource%20Dri ch%20countries>.
4. Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002, (Act No. 15 of 2003) Acts of Parliament, 2003 (India)
5. The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (Act No. 49 of 1988) Acts of Parliament, 1988 (India)
6. Act to Establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, 2008 (Republic of Liberia)
7. Const. of Liberia 1986 (Republic of Liberia)
8. The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 (Act No. 1 of 2014) Parliament of India
9. Liberia Land Authority Act, 2016 (Legislature of the Republic of Liberia) 2016
10. Kaunain Rahman, Liberia; Corruption and Anti-Corruption in the Areas of Environment, Climate Change and Rule of Law; CMI U4 Anti-Corruption resource Centre, Last Visited May 26, 2020
<https://www.u4.no/publications/liberia-in-the-areas-of-environment-climate-change-and-rule-of-law>
11. Liberia Land Rights Act, 2018 (Sec. 33.3) Legislature of the Republic of Liberia (2018)
12. Environmental Protection Agency Act of Liberia, 2003 (Liberia)
13. Ms. Rachael Knight; Liberia's Land rights Victory Means the Work Has Just Begun; Land Blog Portal, Nov. 2, 2018
<https://landportal.org/blog-post/2021/02/land-rights-act-victory-liberia-means-work-has-just-begun>
14. Transparency International: Corruption in logging Licenses and Concessions: Working Paper, Pg. 1 (03/2010) Last Visited Mar. 8, 2026
https://files.transparencycdn.org/images/2010_WP_LoggingConcessions_EN.pdf
15. Goal 4, United Nations; Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Last Visited Mar. 7, 2026
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
16. Liberia Makes Marginal Progress in 2025 CPI Report: Moves 1 Point Up the Ladder, Highlighting Need for Drastic Reforms to Significantly Improve Performance, CENTAL, Feb. 10, 2026
<https://cental.org.lr/index.php/documents/media-center/news/item/159-liberia-makes-marginal-progress-in-2025-cpi-report-moves-1-point-up-the-ladder-highlighting-need-for-drastic-reforms-to-significantly-improve-performance#:~:text=Ladies%20and%20gentlemen%20of%20the.address%20corruption%20in%20a%20country>
17. Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia, 2003 (Republic of Liberia) April 30, 2003
<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/lbr53038.pdf>