



International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies (IRJIMS)

A Peer-Reviewed Monthly Research Journal

ISSN: 2394-7969 (Online), ISSN: 2394-7950 (Print)

Volume-I, Issue-VIII, September 2015, Page No. 19-26

Published by: Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://www.irjims.com>

Corruption is the Main Barrier to Development

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Abstract

If every citizen of a country will become honest, then that country will surely grow by leaps and bounds. Honesty leads to growth, development and progress in all aspects of life and society. The opposite of honesty is corruption. Corruption is an act done by taking undue advantage of one's position, power or authority to gain certain rewards and favours. Corruption opposes development and growth. It is very harmful and detrimental for all aspects of society and life. It corrodes their beauty, values, strength and resources. In India, the epidemic of corruption is spreading rapidly in every fields and departments. Contractors and builders are constructing weak and low standard roads, bridges and houses. Students are engaged in mass copying. Teachers and examining body are indulge in leaking out question papers. Doctors prescribe unnecessary medicines and pathology examinations for commissions. Traders are engaged in overcharging, adulteration and underweighting. Government officials take bribe for doing or sanctioning any work or contracts. Scams in banks, financial institutions, sports, defense department, religious places, government projects are the order of the day. Hence, it has become biggest threat to the social and economical development of India. There is tremendous loss of national wealth due to various scams. In order to cure society from this deadly social pathology.

Key Words: Corruption, Development, Growth, Society, Barrier.

Introduction

Corruption is one of the most pervasive problems India faces. Corruption flows deep into Indian Economy and is a major setback to her development. India reformed its economy in 1991 to reduce red tape-ism and reduce the widespread corruption in India during the socio-democratic economy before 1990 but hasn't been able to successful reduce corruption. Be it the recent Commonwealth Games scandal or the 2G Sham or the much-hyped less-done Bofors Scandal in the 1980's, corruption is something prevalent in every level and every region of our country. Bofors Scandal is supposed to be in the tune of Rs. 400 Crores in the 80's, a period itself when India was reeling from poor economy. The much recent Commonwealth Games 2010 made mockery of the Indian Government with the following excerpt from Wikipedia, "The initial total budget estimated by the Indian Olympic Association in 2003 for hosting the Games was 1,620 crore (US\$351.54 million). In 2010, however, the official total budget soon escalated to an estimated 11,500 crore (US \$42.5 billion), a figure which excluded non-sports-related infrastructure development. Business Today

magazine estimated that the Games cost 60,000 crore (US \$13.02 billion). The 2010 Commonwealth Games are reportedly the most expensive Commonwealth Games ever.”

The recent scandals that hovered the limelight was the 2G scam which has not only involved top ministers but has also taken India back to the tune of over 1.76 Lakh Crores, a figure so large that could have helped in changing the face of India and helped it address issues of development. The economic reforms of 1991 reduced the red tape, bureaucracy and the License Raj that had strangled private enterprise and was blamed for the corruption and inefficiencies. Yet, a 2005 study by Transparency International (TI) India found that more than half of those surveyed had firsthand experience of paying bribe or peddling influence to get a job done in a public office.

A study by Transparency International, 2005 provides the statistics that truckers provide US\$ 5 billion as bribes to government officials. Political Corruption is one of the major concerns for India with its rank slipping to 85th most corrupt country out of 178 in the year 2014.

The Vohra (Committee) Report by the India's Union Home Secretary Mr. N.N Vohra in October, 1993 explained about the nexus between the politicians, bureaucrats and the criminals. The Supreme Court has been demanding action on the Vohra Report ever since, with no considerable success.

The fight to corruption is required to be given a central position in any reform even that takes place inside our country. No proper development can take place if corruption isn't tackled. Corruption threatens development and security in every aspect. Corruption brings a sense of alienation in the people of any country especially India, where a common person views any bureaucrat, politician or any government post holder with different light and disregard. Apart from that corruption if unchecked, can cause a country ungovernable due to a large public outcry and may lead to chaos and war. India needs to check its stance on corruption as well, if the government needs to continue its functioning with the public support. Corruption also hampers development in the sense that it increases the transaction cost of any government service that takes place while reducing the efficiency of the particular transaction. An example of this is the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in which all the materials bought for the Games were overpriced. Not only did it affect the reputation of the organizing committee and the Delhi Government in general but also hampered with the efficiency of the government with 70,000 Crores of taxpayer's money going into drain, a dramatic 1575% rise over the original budget for the games.

Corruption also hampers development as it reduces the state-revenue as most of the money goes in the pocket to satisfy the urge of the babus and other government officials. While the state could have made a more appropriate use of the money, it is indeed another chance lost by the government for the development of the nation. Corruption also affects development of the citizens as a whole not only in the terms that it alienates the common public from the new "elite" class, but also they have to face the burden of the corruption. Transparency International (2005) states that 75% of the common man in India has agreed to paying some form or another bribe or peddling influence to get a government job. Corruption is so common in an Indian's life be it in the form of bribing any traffic constable to escape challans or to pass a buck to any government incumbent to get the work done. The negative impact of corruption falls directly on its citizens and small scale industries that have to face the brunt of government agencies in order to survive. The brunt of corruption is faced by the poor and the unprotected that not only pay the required taxes and the rents but also pay the bribes to get the work done but often depriving them of the essential government services. Corruption takes away the chance from the state and the central government to provide a fair development and chance to bring economic reforms.

Corruption is particularly present in the judiciary, an institution that is supposed to uphold the rule of law. In some cases, judges extract bribes not only for delivering a verdict in a predetermined way but even for merely hearing a case. Lower order court clerks can also solicit bribes for producing or hiding certain information that is crucial to cases. The independence of the judiciary itself can be undermined by the executive branch influencing the appointment and promotion of judges. In such situations, judges are pressured to reach verdicts not based on justice but on political expediencies.

The conviction rate in corruption cases is as low as six percent, hence corruption has become low risk high profit activity for the people involved. Such is the poor state of our country, that an article on Wikipedia provides this excerpt "In July 2008 The Washington Post reported that nearly a fourth of the 540 Indian Parliament members faced criminal charges, "including human trafficking, immigration rackets, embezzlement, rape and even murder". An international watchdog conducted a study on the illicit flight of money from India, perhaps the first ever attempt at shedding light on a subject steeped in secrecy, concludes that India has been drained of \$462 billion (over Rs 20 lakh crore) between 1948 and 2008. The amount is nearly 40% of India's gross domestic product." Imagine what had been the outcome of our country, had this amount been spent on the development of the company rather than being spent on the non deserving government incumbents. Corruption has managed to seep into every possible area a person can think of in India, be it Armed forces which includes the Sulekha Land Scandal or the Adarsh Society Scam or the police department which includes transfers and promotions based on corruption or attacking the innocent for the rich offenders hence putting a mark on the accountability of the police. While a lot has been said about how corruption has spread throughout country and how it has affected the development of our country.

Consequences of Corruption

1) Loss of National wealth

This is the greatest loss for the people of India. Since independence, India is showing tremendous growth in corruption (Jeep deal to 2 G spectrum scams). India lost billions and billions dollars of money in various scams. Instead of becoming independent affluent nation, India is dependent on international loans, grants and favours due to this tremendous of wealth in corruption.

2) Hindrance and obstruction in development

Corruption is the only obstruction in the way towards development. We cannot become a developed and self sufficient nation until corruption is not eradicated from our country. Many developmental projects are taking unnecessary time for their completion due to corruption. Since, many officials consider these projects as special hens (hens which lay golden eggs every day). If project will get completed, these special hens will die. Hence, they take proper care of these hens.

3) Backwardness

Due to corruption, India is behind in almost every field- sports, inventions, health, medicine, research, education, economy, defence, infrastructure, technology and so on. Many scientists do not have latest equipments and technology for research and development. Sportsmen do not have proper facilities, equipments, coaching and training. There are scams and corruption in defence deals. Many doctors lack specialized and modern skills of treatment and diagnosis.

4) Poverty

Due to corruption, government is unable to eradicate poverty. Rich are becoming richer by snatching the rights and wealth of poor. Various packages, reservations and compensations for poor people, minorities and backward community are announced by government from time to time. But these disadvantaged sections of society hardly get any benefits. Since, affluent people freely consume benefits meant for poor.

5) Authority and power in wrong hands

Ineligible and incapable candidates are selected for various important positions. They pay and get selected. Due to their inefficiency, there exist many faults and weaknesses in system and management. These faults get easily hidden through corruption. The deserving and creative candidates satisfy themselves with unsuitable jobs and positions.

6) Brain drain

Corrupt employers and mediators offer jobs to unskilled and incapable candidates by taking bribe. They get their share of wealth. But nation loses its valuable share. Due to lack of good opportunities in India, many creative and talented Indian are serving developed nations. This is a tremendous loss for India. Since, we cannot become a developed nation without the contribution of talented and creative people.

Talented people who serve other countries are actually cheating with their own nation. They are made capable and efficient by their own nation. But they use their capabilities for increasing the efficiency of other nation. This is also considered as corruption.

7) Rise in terrorism and crimes

One of the reasons for rise in crimes is corruption in police administration. Police departments grant security and protection to the citizens. When this departments get engaged in corrupt activities. Then there is no control on crimes and brutal killings. Since, criminals are given freedom and victims are tortured. Besides, corruption also leads to injustice. Injustice gives birth to crimes and anti social activities. Citizens take up arms for securing justice.

8) Rise in suicide cases

Suicide cases are increasing in India by leaps and bounds. One of the major causes in several suicide cases is injustice resulting from corruption. Government announces various schemes and help packages for farmers but most of the time this financial help does not reach to the farmers due to corruption in administration. This leads to rise suicides cases among farmers. Candidates fulfil all necessary criteria for jobs or admissions, but then also they fail in their attempt to secure it. Because they do not have political contacts and money. This leads to hopelessness and depression which ultimately results in suicide.

9) Psychological and social disorders

Due to corruption in judicial system and police administration. Culprits are left free and victims get punishments and injustice. Due to this injustice, many victims suffer from depression and serious psychological disorders. Many victims get frustrated with judicial system and develops feeling of revenge against culprits. As a result, the victims become culprits by engaging themselves in anti-social activities. It corrodes the healthy social fabric of nation.

Cures of corruption

- 1) **Value education:** Parents and teachers should inculcate moral values in children. Practice is more persuasive than preaching. The best way to inculcate values in children is not only to preach but to set an example by actual doing. They should set themselves as models of good behavior. They should narrate stories based on moral values. Teacher should not only teach morals in value education period but they should inculcate values in pupils by correlating value education with various subjects and activities. They should not leave any stone unturned for achieving this great purpose.
- 2) **Effective and regular vigilance:** Strict action should be taken against lazy and corrupt officials. Number of agencies and officials should be increased. They should be properly trained in the latest investigative skills. Government should supervise and monitor these agencies. They should be quick and active in their duties. They should not delay their investigation and inspection. Since, these delays is the cause for loss of tremendous wealth of nation.
- 3) **Responsible citizen:** If an individual is corrupt, he cannot expect those in power to be free from corruption. Hence, it is essential for every citizen to perform his duties faithfully and to the best of their abilities. Every citizen should strive hard to eradicate corruption. People of India should report cases of corruption to vigilance department immediately without delay. They should follow up the cases of corruption. Since, merely reporting the evil practice is not sufficient for its complete eradication.
- 4) **Strong and Effective leadership and administration:** All those who are granted powers and authority by people should fulfill their promises and pledge. They should strive their utmost to eradicate corruption from systems and administrations. They should give up hypocrisy. Government and vigilance agencies should keep a check on their source of income and bank accounts. If any leader is not performing his duties properly, then he should be immediately terminated from the position. It should be performance based position. Government should do performance appraisal of leaders regularly.
- 5) **Media:** Media has wider coverage and impact. It plays an important role in changing the life of people. It should frequently expose the cases of corruption. It should educate people against corruption on regular basis. Journalists and editors should give complete information about the issues related to corruption in their newspapers. Reporters should give more importance to the news and information on corruption, they should report corruption cases immediately.
- 6) **Legislation:** Government should frame strict and stringent anti-corruption laws. Severe punishments and penalties should be imposed on corrupt people. The justice and proceedings should not be delayed. Immediate action should be taken against corrupt people. The punishment should act as a good lesson for other corrupt people.
- 7) **Social organization:** Non-government organizations should work in coordination with people and vigilance departments for prevention of illegal activities. They should devise and plan innovative strategies and methods against corruption.
- 8) **Declaration of wealth and assets:** It should be made mandatory for political leaders and government officials to declare their wealth and assets. Investigation agencies should strictly and properly check their claims and declaration.

- 9) **Transparency:** Every process of selection, dealing and appointments of different fields should be made transparent. People should be made aware of reasons and merit for selection of candidates, contracts, tenders, etc.
- 10) **Advertising:** Advertising and marketing agencies should educate and aware people against corruption. There should be appealing ads on internet, vehicles, bus stops, railway stations, sign boards and television.
- 11) **Serials and films:** Films are powerful medium of mass communication. Films have powerful influence and widespread appeal. Films can be used to create public opinion against corruption. Producers should make certain popular serials and movies against corruption. Serials should have different episodes dealing with various types of corruption and their cures.
- 12) **Appointment and admissions:** Selection of students, managers, officers and executives should only be based on merit. It is the responsibility of candidates and parents to critically examine the selection and appointment procedures. They should report irregularities to the higher authorities without delay.
- 13) **Religious sermon:** In India, people show very strict adherence to their faith and belief. They are very sensitive towards religion, place of worship and religious leaders. They have deep attachment and great respect for preachers and spiritual orators. They try to adopt the teachings of their spiritual leaders in day to day life. Hence, religious leaders should give sermons against corruption.
- 14) **Loyalty and patriotism:** Every citizen of India should become patriotic in true sense. He should give priority and preference to the development of his nation. He should always remain loyal to their beautiful culture, ethics and country. Social workers, political leaders, media and teachers should inculcate true patriotism in the citizens of India.
- 15) **Dedicated and diligent leaders:** There should be more dedicated, devoted and diligent leaders like Medha Patkar and Anna Hazare. These leaders dedicated their whole life for eradicating corruption. It is the responsibility of every citizen of India to support and cooperate with leaders who are sincerely striving against corruption.
- 16) **Coordination and control:** All government and non-government agencies should work in coordination with media, educational institutions and corporate sectors to control and eradicate corruption. They should be united in their efforts against corruption.
- 17) **Creative writers:** Pen is mightier than sword. Creative writers should write appealing articles and books against corruption. They should write interesting short stories based on honesty.
- 18) **College and Universities:** These institutions should educate and train the youth against corruption. They should organise symposium, debates, group discussion, seminars and lectures for this purpose.
- 19) **Gratitude:** We Indian should show gratitude towards all those honest people who sacrificed and laid their lives for eradicating corruption from our beautiful country. It is now our turn to take this greatest responsibility and make our nation free from corruption.

Some more few methods to curb corruption

1. Sensitize the public against corruption Most of the Indian Citizens have lost faith in the government thinking that no possible government work can be completed without bribing the officials starting from the very bottom and going till the top. Sensitizing the education system and providing the true education and enriching the society with issues like morals, values and ethics is required.
2. Reforming the Indian Judicial System Stringent measures are required to curb corruption with strict actions against government officials who rely on public money for their benefit. Also the Indian Judiciary should ensure faster processing of cases and stricter sentences for the people involved.
3. Provide opportunities to the poor and the middle class Most of the middle class and clerical employees take the route of corruption because of lack of incentives and income provided by the government as compared to the expenditure. Better salaries and better facilities are required to be provided at the clerical levels so that the poor may not suffer from the brunt of corruption.
4. Also distribution of money is very important, so that the decisions of monetary issues are not only vested to the rich but equally to the have-nots.
5. Privatization and Computerization of various departments Implementing e-governance is a step that is not only required to facilitate seamless flow of information but also keep a check on corruption. E-Governance would provide a platform for the citizens of India to check what each government department is up to and would be able to provide its grievances not just against the particular department but also any particular person as well. Privatization of defunct and corrupted department would not only provide the government a method to generate revenue but also curb the corruption in that particular department.

Few private sector initiatives have already been put into place like

1. <http://5thpillar.org> is one such organization that is promoting the use of Zero Rupee Notes to fight corruption by shaming the officials who ask for bribe.
2. Another popular initiative Jaago Re! One Billion Votes from Tata Tea has now changed its focus from voter registration to fighting corruption.
3. Nobribe.org is another platform for corruption free India and advocates the use of direct and regular measurement of corruption to force the hands of the leadership into dealing with corruption related issues.
4. Another platform is <http://www.indiaagainstcorruption.com> India against Corruption is a movement created by concerned citizens from all spheres, and professions, who've come together to fight corruption in India.
5. <http://www.ipaidabribe.com> is one such site.
6. Another site which has recently sprung up is www.ekakizunj.com. It is inspired by Khairnar, the erstwhile Mumbai Municipal commissioner and intends to create a database of all the corrupt in India.

Conclusion

There is a much better grasp today of the extent to which corruption is a symptom of fundamental institutional weaknesses. Instead of tackling such a symptom with narrow intervention

designed to “eliminate” it, it is increasingly understood that the approach ought to address a broad set of fundamental institutional determinants. However, the challenge of integrating this understanding with participatory process has barely begun. The implementation of institutional reforms can benefit significantly from the participatory process that is being developed for anti-corruption activities. Equally important, any participatory process, however sophisticated, ought to lead to concrete results beyond enhanced participation and heightened awareness. Thus, identifying key institutional reforms in India, and mobilising support for such reforms, needs to be fully integrated into the participatory process from very early on. Such early convergence is likely to promote a better balance between prevention and enforcement measures in addressing corruption. Until recently, the pendulum was firmly in the “enforcement” corner. The gradual swing towards the middle ground has taken place due to recognition of the limitations to expose legalistic enforcement measures, since the law institutions themselves are currently part of the corruption problem in India. Therefore, corruption is an intractable problem; it is like diabetes, which can only be controlled, but not totally eliminated. It may not be possible to root out corruption completely at all levels but it is possible to contain it within tolerable limits. Honest and dedicated persons in public life, control over electoral expenses, could be some of the important prescriptions to combat corruption. Corruption has a corrosive impact on our economy and leads to loss of overseas opportunities. Corruption is a global problem that all countries of the world have to confront: solutions, however, can only be home-grown.

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