



Psychology of Corruption in India: Causes & Combat

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Corruption is widespread in India. India is ranked 85 out of 179 countries in Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, although its score has improved consistently from 2.7 in 2002 to 3.4 in 2008 (1). Corruption has taken the role of a pervasive aspect of Indian politics and bureaucracy. It is not easy to define corruption. But in a narrow sense, corruption is primarily concerned with bribe and it takes several forms. Corruption is a global phenomenon and it is omnipresent. Corruption has progressively increased and is now rampant in our society.

Corruption in India is a consequence of the nexus among Bureaucracy, politics and criminals. India is no longer considered a soft state now. It has now become a consideration state where everything can be had for a consideration. Today the number of ministers with an honest image can be counted on fingers. At one time bribe was paid for getting wrong things done but now bribe is being given for right things to be done at right time. The most disquieting aspect of the widespread corruption in India is the fact that it is not anymore confined to politicians or the government machinery alone. It is prevalent amongst almost every section of the society at every level.

As the practice of corruption is a dishonest act, one has to think that most of the Indians are dishonest, which could be different only in degree between the individuals. As the reason for the dishonesty is greediness and the desire to get things done at any cost, one can think that most of the countrymen are greedy and do not think anymore that the means should justify the ends. This is not a flattering statement and many readers would desire that it would not be so and such a statement could have been avoided. But, the fact is that most of the Indians are involved in corrupt practices in one way or the other, either due to greed or due to so-called compulsion, in any case the willingness to sacrifice for the sake of not getting involved in corrupt dealing is conspicuous by its absence amongst the most. Today, if one would say that any particular Indian is honest to the core, it could only be a case of exception rather than a rule.

Indian administration is riddled with scandals. According to the Corruption Perception Index 2004, India is ranked 55 of the 106 countries where corruption is rampant. Report released by Transparency International, corruption in India leads to promotion not prison. It is very difficult to catch big sharks here. Corruption in India has wings not wheels. As ration grows, the corrupt also grow to invent new methods of cheating the government and public.



POLITICS: - Criminalization of Indian politics is a problem (5)(6). In July 2008, Washington Times reported that nearly a fourth of the 540 Indian Parliament members faced criminal charges including human trafficking, immigration rackets, embezzlement, rape and even murder (7). At state level, things are often worse. In Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2002, candidates with criminal records won the majority of seats.

BUREAUCRACY: -A study done by Transparency International in India in 2005 found that more than 50% of the people had first hand experience of paying bribe or peddling influence to get a job done in a public office. Taxes and bribes are common between state borders; Transparency International estimates that truckers pay annually 5 billion in bribes. A 2009 survey of the leading economies of Asia revealed Indian bureaucracy to be not just least efficient out of Singapore, Hone, kong, Thailand etc; further it was also found that working with the India's civil servants was a "slow and painful" process. Here officials often steal state property. In Bihar, more than 80 % of the subsidized food aid to poor is stolen.

In cities and villages throughout India, Mafia Raj consisting of municipal and other government officials, elected politicians, judicial officers, real estate developers and law enforcement officials acquire, officers, and sell land by illegal ways. Many state funded construction activities in India, Such as road building, government building constructions are dominated by construction mafias, which consist of corrupt public works officials, material suppliers, politicians and construction contractors shoddy construction and material substitution. In govt. hospitals, corruption is associated with nonavailability of medicines, getting admission, consultations with doctors and availing diagnostic services.

JUDICIARY: - Corruption is rampant in the judicial system of India. According to Transparency International, judicial corruption in India is attributable to factors such as "delays in the disposal of cases, shortage of judges and complex procedures all of which are exacerbated by a preponderance of new laws".

POLICE: - Despite state prohibitions against torture and custodial misconduct by the police, torture is widespread in police custody, which is a major reason behind deaths in custody (14)(15). The police often torture innocent people until a so-called 'confession' is obtained to save influential and wealthy offenders (16). G.P. Joshi, the programme coordinator of the Indian branch of the commonwealth Human Rights Initiative in New Delhi comments that the main issue at hand concerning police violence is a lack of accountability of the police.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS: - In India, the corruption has also crept into religious institutions. Some members of the church are making money by selling Baptism certificates. A group of church leaders and activists has launched a campaign to combat the corruption within churches. Among Indian Muslims, the recent "cash for Fatwa scandal" was a major affair that exposed the Imams of the Islamic ulema accepting bribes for issuing random, often



nonsensical fatwas.

CAUSES OF CORRUPTION: -

The causes of corruption are many and complex. Following are some of the causes of corruption-

- Emergence of political elite who believe in interest-oriented rather than nation-oriented programmes and policies.
- Artificial scarcity created by the people with malevolent intentions wrecks the fabric of the economy.
- Corruption is caused as well as increased because of the change in the value system and ethical qualities of men who administer. The old ideals of morality, service and honesty are regarded as an achronistic.
- Tolerance of people towards corruption, complete lack of intense public outcry against corruption and the absence of strong public forum to oppose corruption allow corruption to reign over people.
- Vast size of population coupled with widespread illiteracy and the poor economic infrastructure lead to endemic corruption in public life.
- In a highly inflationary economy, low salaries of government officials compel them to resort to the road to corruption. Graduates from IIMs with no experience draw a far handsome salary than that of govt.secretaries.
- Complex laws and procedures alienate common people to ask for any help from government.
- Election time is a time when corruption is at its peak level. Big industrialist fund politicians to meet high cost of election and ultimately to seek personal favour. Bribery to politicians buys influence, and bribery by politicians buys votes. In order to get elected, politicians bribe poor illiterate people, who are slogging for two time meal.

Corruption is a cancer, which every Indian must strive to cure. Many new leaders when come into power declare their determination to eradicate corruption but soon they themselves become corrupt and start amassing huge wealth.

There are many myths about corruption, which have to be exploded if we really want to combat it. Some of these myths are: Corruption is a way of life and nothing can be done about it. Only people from underdeveloped or developing countries are prone to corruption. We will have to guard against all these crude fallacies while planning measures to fight corruption. We can combat corruption only when we implement some policies which are as



follows-

- Foolproof laws should be made so that there is no room for discretion for politicians and bureaucrats. The role of the politician should be minimized. Application of the evolved policies should be left in the hands of independent commission or authority in each area of public interest. Decision of the commission or authority should be challengeable only in the courts.
- Cooperation of the people has to be obtained for successfully containing corruption. People should have a right to recall the elected representatives if they see them becoming indifferent to the electorate.
- Funding of elections is at the core of political corruption. Electoral reforms are crucial in this regard. Several reforms like: State funding of election expenses for candidates; strict enforcement of statutory requirements like holding in-party elections, making political parties get their accounts audited regularly and tiling income-tax returns; denying persons with criminal records a chance to contest elections, should be brought in.
- Responsiveness, accountability and transparency are must for a clean system. Bureaucracy, the backbone of good governance, should be made more citizen friendly, accountable, ethical and transparent.
- More and more courts should be opened for speedy & inexpensive justice so that cases don't linger in courts for years.
- Local bodies, Independent from the government like Lokpals, Lokadalats, CVCs and Vigilance Commissions should be formed to provide speedy justice with low expenses.
- A new Fundamental Right viz. Right to Information should be introduced, which will empower the citizens to ask for the information they want. Barring some confidential information, which concerns national and international security, other information should be made available to general public as and when required. Stringent actions against corrupt officials will certainly have a deterrent impact.

Conclusion

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, and control over electoral expenses could be the most important prescriptions to combat corruption. Corruption has a corrosive impact on our economy. It worsens our image in international market 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. We have tolerated corruption for so long. The time has now come to root it out from its roots.

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