

## CORRUPTION FREE INDIA: A NATIONAL DREAM

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### ABSTARCT

In India, the epidemic of corruption is spreading rapidly in every field and department. Contractors and builders are constructing weak and low standard roads, bridges and houses. Students are engaged in mass copying. Teachers and examining bodies are indulged in leaking out question papers, doctors prescribe unnecessary medicines and traders are engaged in overcharging, adulteration and under weighing. Government officials take bribe for doing or sanctioning any work or contracts. Scams in banks, financial institutions, sports, defense department, religious places, and government projects are the order of the day. Hence, it has become biggest threat to the social and economic development of India. There is tremendous loss of national wealth due to various scams. In order to cure society from this deadly social evil, we should know its causes, consequences and remedies. So, the present paper will be an attempt to put stress on the need to keep the issue of corruption in development agenda. It will discuss various sectors of society involved in corruption, causes and consequences of corruption and remedies to snub this evil for a national dream of Corruption Free India to come true.

**KEYWORDS:** Corruption, Scams, Adulteration, Kickoffs, Transparency

### INTRODUCTION

*“There are two things in Indian history-One is the incredible optimism and potential of the place and the other is the betrayal of that potential –for example, corruption. These two strands intertwine through the whole of Indian history, and may not be just Indian history.”*

**Salman Rushdie**

Corruption, embezzlement, fraud, these are the characteristics that exist everywhere. It is regrettably the way human nature functions, whether we like it or not. What successful economies do is keep it to a minimum level. But if we look at India, corruption is at full swing. There is hardly a day on which we don't find news regarding corruption and corrupt officials in a newspaper. Corruption in India, as at international level, takes various forms starting from bribery. Political and bureaucratic corruption in India is a major concern. A 2005 study conducted by Transparency International in India found that more than 45% of Indians have the first hand experience of paying bribes to get jobs done in public offices successfully. A report on bribery in India published by *Trace International* in January, 09 states that 91% of the bribes were demanded by govt. officials, 77% of the bribes demanded were for avoiding harm rather than getting any advantage. Of these 51% were for timely delivery of services to which individual was already entitled e.g. clearing customs or getting a telephone connection. In 2010, India was ranked 87<sup>th</sup> out of 178 countries in Transparency International Corruption Index.

India has suffered a lot from a number of scams what people are calling “**Season of Scams**”. Season of Scams includes the alleged theft of billions by officials during Commonwealth games in Delhi; \$40 billion in revenues lost from the crooked sale of 2G telecoms licenses; and over \$40 billion stolen in Uttar Pradesh alone from schemes subsidizing food

and fuel for the poor. Foreign businessmen who have slashed investment over the past years are of the opinion that Indian corruption is a major deterrent in its overall development. Most of the corruption and governance indicators show that there is little change in India's position over years. Despite agitations against corruption on different fronts, there is no end to it. It seems to be vicious and deep rooted in Indian System that requires concrete efforts.

### **Corruption: Meaning and Definition**

The term "corruption" comes from the Latin word "corruptio" which means "moral decay, wicked behaviour, or rottenness". Vast literature dedicated to corruption defines it differently. For the purpose of this paper corruption is defined as the 'use of public office for private gains' (Bardhan, 1997).

Robert Klitgaard has defined corruption by an equation:

$$\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly Power} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability}$$

Antithesis to corruption is good governance. The term '**governance**' refers to the way government carries out its work through decision-making and implementation. Good governance is governance without abuse and corruption. When there is no accountability, responsiveness, transparency and efficiency, policies are not effectively implemented, and public services are ineffective or unavailable, there is corruption. Thus, Corruption is linked to '**bad**' governance.

As formulated by a recent OECD/ DAC paper (2006): "Corruption is typically the outcome of a dysfunctional governance system. Most commonly, corruption is defined as the "use of public office for private gain", or for the gain of particular groups (for example, a political party or an informal patronage network)." As corruption occurs due to bad governance, the question remains, if good governance benefits the population and corruption causes suffering, why people participate in corrupt behavior then?

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Objectives of the study are:

- To study the nature and various typologies of corruption
- To assess various sectors prone to corruption
- To know the reasons of corruption
- To assess consequences of corruption for India
- To suggest some ways to fight against corruption

### **Nature and Various Typologies of Corruption**

Corruption is prevalent in many forms. So there is no universally accepted definition and typology of corruption. Researchers have different views and multiple classifications on it. Some of the typologies are as under:

**Roebuck and Barker (1974)** postulates an empirical typology of police corruption derived from content analysis of literature published between 1960-1972 and the police work experience. Types of police corruption are:

- Corruption of authority
- Kickbacks
- Opportunistic theft

- Shakedown
- Protecting illegal activities
- The fix
- Direct criminal activities
- Internal payoffs

**Heidenheimer(1989:149 ff.)** distinguishes three different evaluations of corruption in society:

**White corruption:** Corrupt behaviourist coded tolerantly

**Grey corruption:** regarded with some opprobrium

Reprehensible in public moral standards, but affected persons are widely missing a consciousness of doing wrong.

**Black corruption:-** Is generally regarded as severe violation of community moral and legal norms.

**Alemann(1995)**,proposed following types of corruption:

- Low level corruption
- Top level corruption
- Petty corruption
- Routine corruption
- Aggravated corruption

Corruption is always an exchange process between two persons: **The corrupter (A)**, having economic resources at his disposal, and **the corruptee (B)**, having power resources at his disposal. He explained the **cycle of corruption** as: **The corrupter** (the person offering the bribe) wants a rare good (an order, license, or position) which **the corruptee** (the person to be bribed) can assign. The latter receives an additional incentive (money or payment in kind) for the assignment above normal price. The corruptee thereby violates generally accepted moral standards and damages the interests of a third party or competitor and/or the public interest. Therefore corruption is hidden and concealed.

Corruption, misconduct and crime, a three way typology modeled by **Punch (2000)** defines corruption as doing something against officer's duty in exchange for money or gifts.

Analysing the case of corruption in privatization of state owned enterprises, **Tserendondov (2001)** develops a typology providing framework for dealing with corruption in different contexts of privatization:

- Taking state assets without competition, misusing public funds
- State individuals, groups or firms using their current position and authority to influence government policies and laws
- Bankrupting state owned enterprises and assigning lower value than the real estimate

**Miller (2001, 2003)** upholds that officers are vulnerable to bribes when they feel letDown by their job. His typology of corruption is:

- Individual and Organized
- Internally networked

**Ray Baker's** typology considers following forms of corruption based on actors:

- Traditional government corruption, criminal corruption, entrepreneurial governmental corruption.
- Political influence, state capture and administrative corruption are phenomena at the interface between public sphere in which political actors, public administrators and civil servants operate and relate to actors of private sphere, persons, firms, nongovernmental organizations, civil society etc.

Typology used by **Pedersen and Johannsen (2008)** for measuring corruption distinguishes:

- Day-to-day corruption that takes place at lower levels of administrative hierarchy
- Grand corruption at middle and higher level of public administration directly in political sphere

#### **Various Sectors in India Prone to Corruption**

In India, the epidemic of corruption is spreading rapidly in every field and department. Contractors and builders are constructing weak and low standard roads, bridges and houses. Students are engaged in mass copying. Teachers and examining bodies are indulged in leaking out question papers, doctors prescribe unnecessary medicines and traders are engaged in overcharging, adulteration and under weighing. Government officials take bribe for doing or sanctioning any work or contracts. Scams in banks, financial institutions, sports, defense department, religious places, and government projects are the order of the day. If we see, no sector of the society is corruption free. Various sectors prone to corruption are as under:

- **Education Sector:** Corruption in Education sector is about 5.3% of entire population of India. Seeds are in admission process. Dominant modes are:
  - Donations (57%)
  - Use of influential relatives (19%).

Corrupt activities are private tuitions, additional money for form fill up, getting different kinds of certificates and money deduction by management from stipend awarded to students.

- **Health Sector:** Corruption in Health sector is about 8% of the entire population. Improper supply of food and medicines, carelessness of doctors and nurses, extra money for medicines, medicine to be bought from designated pharmacy are some of corrupt activities in health sector.
- **Power Sector:** Corruption in power sector is about 5.9% of entire population of India. Improper supply of electricity, excess electricity bill, extra money for getting electricity line and wrong meter readings are key corrupt activities.
- **Land Administration:** 3% of entire population of India is facing corruption in land administration. Various corrupt activities are to wait for a long time for getting documents, extra money for Mutation, land survey, to determine the boundary of land and to change land use.

- **Taxation:** Various corrupt activities in taxation are paying for underassessment, for tax reduction and fictitious assessment.
- **Police Sector:** In Police Sector money is paid to file FIR, for police verification for passport and job, to arrest accused, to avoid arrest and also for going on the wrong side of road.
- **Judiciary:** In judiciary money is paid to the witness, public prosecutor, court official, magistrate, opponent lawyer, judge and clerk.
- **Railways:** In railways extra money is paid to get reservations, to get ticket urgently, to travel on someone else's ticket, taking money and not returning change etc.
- **Telecom Sector:** Linesman gets extra money to install phone, to correct dead phone, for quick service .Money given to local office when phone is dead and manipulated larger bills are other corrupt acts.
- **Rationing:** Corrupt activities are to collect money for issuing of new cards, weighing less, delayed delivery, low quality products, adulteration etc.

### Reasons of Corruption in India

The most important reason of corruption is the nature of human being itself. These days people prefer to live lavishly and are after earning money by hook or crook. They are so materialistic and money minded that they don't even afraid of indulging in illegal and corrupt practices to earn more and more money. This is not the only reason responsible for corruption. There are some other reasons like:

- Poor regulatory framework
- Exclusivist process of decision making aggravated by discretion and official secrecy
- Rigid bureaucratic structures and processes
- Absence of effective internal control mechanism.
- Social acceptability and tolerance for corruption
- Absence of a formal system of inculcating the values of ethics and integrity
- Lack of effective management and organization
- Economic instability
- Large size of population, mass poverty, mass hunger and widespread illiteracy
- Ineffective leadership
- Inadequate public support
- Irresponsible attitude of people towards country
- Corrupt administrative system
- Lack of autonomy in private sector
- Lack of exemplary punishment to the criminals

- Lack of good control and vigilance
- Exploitation of employees, unemployment etc.

*“From an institutional perspective, corruption arises where public officials have wide authority, little accountability, and perverse incentives. This means the more activities public officials control or regulate; the more opportunities exist for corruption. Furthermore, lower the probability of detection and punishment, greater the risk that corruption will take place. In addition, the lower the salaries, the rewards for performance, the security of employment, and the professionalism in public service, the greater the incentives for public officials to pursue self-serving rather than public-serving ends.”*

A report by **CDG (Center for Democracy and Governance), Feb. 2009**

### **Consequences of Corruption for India**

Whether it is India or any other country, corruption is a bane for every nation. Corruption is anti-social, anti-poor, anti-growth, anti-investment and inequitable. Cost of corruption for a nation is very high. It has numeral consequences for a nation. Visible consequences of corruption are mentioned below:

- It depletes democratic values and good governance. Corruption in elections and legislative bodies reduces accountability and representation in policymaking
- Corruption in judiciary suspends rule of law
- Corruption in public administration hinders equal provision of services
- Officials are hired or promoted without regard to performance
- Corruption generates distortions and inefficiency and adversely hit the economic development
- Corruption raises the cost of doing business. Officials intentionally promote certain conditions to ensure that they get bribes, through delays and unnecessary requirements.
- Corruption also generates economic distortions in public sector by diverting public investment away from education into capital projects where bribes and kickbacks are plenty. Officials increase the technical complexity of public sector projects to conceal such dealings, thus further distorting investment.
- Corruption lowers compliance with construction, environmental, or other regulations; reduces quality of government services and infrastructure; and increases budgetary pressures on government, thus deters investment and reduces economic growth. **World Development Report 1997**, “The State in Changing World” reveals that investment drops off most in countries with higher corruption levels.
- Corruption hinders human development by limiting access to basic social services and by increasing their delivery cost.
- Corruption has lead to neglect of social sector on the ground that quality of human resources is very poor in India. Education and health opportunities are very limited due corruption which affect quality of life, productivity, income, competitiveness, innovativeness and poverty reduction in India.
- Due to corruption, we are lagging behind almost in every field- sports, inventions, health, medicine, research, education, economy, defense, infrastructure, technology and so on.

- Various packages, reservations and compensations for poor, minorities and backward communities announced by government from time to time don't reach to them due to corruption.
- Ineligible and incapable candidates are selected for various important positions with the power of money. Corrupt officials offer jobs to unskilled and incapable candidates by taking bribe. Due to lack of good opportunities in own country, many creative and talented natives go to serve other nations.
- Corruption leads to injustice. Injustice gives birth to crimes and anti social activities. Injustice resulting from corruption e.g. government announces various schemes and help packages for farmers but most of the time they not reach to the farmers due to corrupt administration. This leads to farmer suicides.

### **Suggestions to Fight against Corruption**

Recently, corruption is being addressed by financial institutions, government agencies, bilateral donors, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and development professionals due to its adverse impacts on human development.

Despite countless policy diagnoses, public campaigns to raise awareness, and institutional and legal reforms to improve public administration, it is observed that it continues to flourish. Corruption needs to be fought on multiple fronts. Following measures can be helpful:

- Integrated approach of government, civil society and business firms
- Strict laws and; strict and exemplary punishments
- Quick and early disposal of cases of corruption
- Electoral reforms
- Value enriched education to people to make them responsible and corruption free
- Every government office must disseminate information to general public where they can report the bribery cases. Government should keep the identity of the complainant confidential/secret
- Anonymous complaint boxes in each government office to encourage general public to complain against corrupt officials without any fear

### **CONCLUSIONS**

We can conclude that Corruption is a greatest single bane of our society today. It is such an evil that destroys a system in such a way that we are left with valueless society, lopsided economic development and dysfunctional legal framework. It swallows a transparent and prosperous social, political and economic system. Though every single citizen of India wishes to get rid of it, but it is not as easy as it seems to be.

It is a national dream to make our nation corruption free. But how is it possible? As I mentioned earlier that most important factor responsible for corruption is our own nature. So first of all we must be strong enough with high morale to fight this evil. A value based education is must to make ourselves ethically and morally robust. Further, to curb this menace, it must first be thoroughly diagnosed and then requires strong collective efforts from different sectors of society. Role of general public is utmost important. It is only when public supports leader like Anna Hazare, Arvind Kejriwal, Bhagwant Mann that government is compelled to ensure transparency and accountability in administration. Be a

revolutionary for a right cause. The cause is to fulfill the national dream of Corruption free India. It is our own responsibility to turn the dream into reality. Find reality in the words of **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**,

*“If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher.”*

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