



CORRUPTION – MENACE AND CHALLENGE

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ABSTRACT:

Nearly two centuries ago Edmund Burke mentioned "Among the people generally corrupt liberty cannot long exist". When during the Second World War France fell to Germany the French philosopher Roma in Rolland said with anguish "France fell because there was corruption without indignation."



KEY WORDS: Corruption, Corrupt liberty.

INTRODUCTION

1. THE SOCIO - POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Political – economic realm in the country has severed itself from the moral realm.
- Mass culture is dominating: Distance between the Government and People is widening.
- Appeal for power is through fragmented social mobilizations that are divisive, confrontatory and fissiparous.
- Power has glamour, clout, immunity and legitimizes, per se, its achievements.
- Even renouncers of power (so called saints) have moved to proximities of power.
- Permissiveness, consumerism and media indecency prevail.
- Corroding deculturation of politics, mendacious business behavior and a supine, opportunistic, corrupt and mercenary bureaucracy. Administration of justice has become expensive, inaccessible and frustratingly delaying. We thus witness almost across the board institutional failures. The intellectual class has become weak.
- Corrupt Election System
- Lines between power and authority intersect and do not coalesce.
- Servants of the state have become the servants of power.
- Black money in India is estimated between Rs. 150 lakh crores to 200 lakh crores.
- 'Public money is like holy water; everybody dips his hand in to it'.

2. GROWING SYMPTOMS:

- Smt. Indira Gandhi once observed that, "corruption is a global phenomena".
- "In India corruption, like democracy, is so spectacular, so accommodative, and so elastic. Its ways and means boggle the mind."
- "The Indian Scandal Book" is what constitutes the report card of India in ethical terms.
- "Corruption in India is way of Life"
- "Have we become a banana republic?"
- "Political corruption is the mother of all corruption in India".

- g) Politics in India has become a profession rather than avocation.
- h) We do not have political culture, only uncultured politics in the country.
- i) Political parties have become political gangs.
- j) Disjunction between policy formulation and policy implementation.

3. CORRUPTION: WHY HAS IT BECOME SO WIDESPREAD AND PERVERSIVE?

- a) Moral inversion is inconsistent with social survival and must be corrected. It is a lethal danger.
- b) Ethical nihilism needs to be stamped out. Moral standards are cultural artifacts without which no society can survive in the stresses of social and economic life.
- c) Recently a Times of India survey asking for the most serious problem faced by the country brought out are sponse from the 60% of respondents that it was corruption.
- d) The Transparency International has developed a “Corruption Perception Index (CPI)” which it has been publishing for a number of years now. The 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index Measures The Perceived Levels Of Public Sector Corruption In 175 Countries And Territories on a scale from 100 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt)
- e) Denmark and New Zealand are jointly perceived as the least corrupt nation in the world, ranking consistently high among International Financial Transparency, while the most perceived corrupt countries in the world are Somalia and South Korea, scoring 8 out of 100 in 2014. India’s TI ranking in 2014 was 85.¹
- f) “The 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index shows that economic growth is undermined and efforts to stop corruption fade when leaders and high level officials abuse power to appropriate public funds for personal gain,” said José Ugaz, the chair of Transparency International.
- g) The scores of several countries rose or fell by four points or more. The biggest falls were in Turkey (-5), Angola, China, Malawi and Rwanda (all -4). The biggest improvers were Côte d’Ivoire and Egypt (+5), Afghanistan, Jordan, Mali and Swaziland (+4).²

4. POLITICAL CORRUPTION:

- a) Political corruption is the mother of all corruption. It is said power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- b) Criminals have become politicians and even ministers. Earlier criminals were go-between. Now have they become direct holders of power.
- c) Those who are responsible for administration, for regulations and for law and order have in a large number of cases transformed from being Watch-dogs to being lapdogs.
- d) The society has become a Consumer Society where greed has overtaken needs and desires have replaced wants.

5. ELECTORAL CORRUPTION:

- a) The present electoral system is conducive to high degree of corruption and malpractices. It provides vast opportunities for unscrupulous players to indulge in unbridled corruption. Sometime ago all political parties had agreed to adopt a code of conduct for the elected representatives of people and a code of ethics in politics. These steps have not materialized, have not been given a concrete shape.

6. FINANCIAL SECTOR CORRUPTION:

¹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2014/index/dnk>

² “Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Clean Growth at Risk”. Transparency.Org (2014).

- a) Some examples:
 - (a) UTI (1997), (b) Chetan Parekh (2000), (c) UTI (2001), (d) Sanjay Agarwal of Hometrade (2002), (e) Century Cyber (2000), (f) Vijay Mallya (2013).
- b) 3911 Companies who raised rupees 25 thousand crores as share capital have vanished between 1992 and 1996.
- c) Thousands of plantation companies cheated investors of an amount of nearly rupees 50 thousand crore in 1995 and 1996.
- d) Corruption has now become an accepted part of life. Rates are openly fixed for college and school admissions, paper leaks and Government jobs. The recent super scandal in Punjab Public Services Commission is a record breaking phenomena of corruption. Industrial units in the country have still to pay bribes to various types of inspectors.
- e) Very high level government officials have been caught in the net of corruption recently. Thus the Chairman of Central Customs Board, Verma, was arrested and so was Mishra, Chief Commissioner of Excise. In the corporate sector corruption prevails both in the public as well as in private sectors.

7. RIGHT TO INFORMATION

- a) Disclosure of the information should be a rule and secrecy the exception. The exceptions should be clearly defined. In this context if there is a dispute between citizen and the public authority there should be an independent mechanism for adjudication.³
- b) Barring documents which may relate to security, intelligence and defence interests of the country other public records should be open to citizens.

8. ISSUES OF CORRUPTION

- a) A great deal of what is often suggested is related to what may be called the curative aspects of administrative reforms. I feel that there is a much greater need to give priority to the preventive approach and this would mean, by and large, introduction of better systems, open government and through the putting on ground of a well-oiled, performing grievance removal machinery. It will also mean greater surveillance at all levels, greater deterrence and bringing to book with speed and vigour those who are corrupt and commit serious infractions of law and rules.
- b) While we may discuss corruption at higher levels most of the citizens experience regular harassment at the cutting edge level of administration and it is at that level that reforms are required. One of the ways in which this could be done is by introducing convergence and one window systems at the service delivery points. I also feel that the scope of corruption and of misuse of power can be reduced if public is informed about the decisions and governments act publicly in all those areas which touch citizens.
- c) The legislation about the setting of the institution of Lokpal at the Central level needs to be expedited. The Institution of Lokayukt at the State level needs to be strengthened.
- d) The Anti-corruption Bureaus⁴ at the State level need to be strengthened in terms of trained personnel, technology, communication systems and legal support. They must be insulated from political interference.
- e) In the Government Departments of large size Chief Vigilance Officer should be posted who should function under the supervision of the Heads of Departments.
- f) Corruption has two aspects- preventive and curative. The need is to be concentrate on preventive measures like vigilance, surveillance, regular declaration of assets (with verification on random basis.), open systems of decision- making, and overseeing of delivery of public services, etc.

³ Agarwal. C (2012). "Right to Information: A Tool for Combating Corruption in India".

⁴ <https://www.accbionline.com/about.php>

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- g) At the curative level there is need for quick investigations, prompt booking of the corrupt and speedy legal proceedings to bring culprit to book.

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