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Corruption in Public Sector and Its Remedies

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ABSTRACT

This is very common convention about corruption to start with a historical reference that emphasizes the longevity and resilience of corruption. Rather than refer to the wisdom of the ancient world or the words of a great statesman I will observe that convention by noting the historical context of this Expert Group Meeting on preventing corruption in the public administration.

The purpose of the meeting is to facilitate progress in corruption prevention, particularly in relation to institutional methods and practice, and to recommend the continuation or consideration of specific strategies for doing so. It is part of a process that is often said to have begun with the so-called “cancer of corruption” speech by World Bank President James Wolfensohn in 1996. By acknowledging the ubiquity of corruption, the lasting damage it can cause and the responsibility of powerful institutions to take action, that speech represented a turning point in the attitude of key international actors and licensed a systematic international effort against corruption that this meeting is part of. Since then corruption has been studied, classified, measured, defined and proscribed by policy makers and practitioners, theorists and researchers mostly in the disciplines of political science, economics, philosophy, public administration and law. This article enlightens on various causes, effects and cures of corruption in India. The International Conventions and Treaties are also discussed to facilitate the member state entities in regard to curb the corruption which become the hindrances in the path of development and progress of any country.

Keywords: Corruption, Bribery, Embezzlement, Theories, Consequences.

I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a cause of serious concern for Indians. Since, it is unfavorably affecting all aspects of their life like social, spiritual, political, economical, educational and moral. It is spreading like tumor in all the systems and administrations. It is a responsibility on every citizen of India to make our country corruption free.

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If every citizen of a country will become honest, that country will surely touch the skies 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 unjustifiable advantage of one's position, power or authority to add on certain rewards and favours. Corruption withstands development and growth. It is very harmful and injurious for all aspects of society and life which crumbles their beauty, values, strength and resources.

In India, the epidemic of corruption is spreading rapidly in every fields and departments.

- Contractors, builders are constructing weak and low standard roads, bridges and houses
- Students are engaged in mass copying.
- Teachers, examining body are indulged in leaking out question papers.
- Doctors prescribe unnecessary medicines, pathology examinations for commissions.
- Traders are engaged in overcharging, adulteration and underweighting.
- Government officials take bribe for doing, sanctioning any work or contracts.
- Scams in banks, financial institutions, sports, defence department, religious places and government projects are the order of the day.

Hence, it has become a 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, we should know its causes, consequences and cures.

II. CATEGORIES OF CORRUPTION²

Categories of corruption	Description
Bribery	It is the act of dishonestly persuading someone to act in one's favour by a payment or other inducement which can take the form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards or other advantages (taxes, services, donations, etc.). The use of bribes can lead to conspiracy (e.g. inspectors under-reporting offences in exchange for bribes) and/or extortion

² 2021. *Why corruption matters: understanding causes, effects and how to address them*. [online] Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406346/corruption-evidence-paper-why-corruption-matters.pdf> [Accessed 9 August 2021].

	(e.g. bribes extracted against the threat of over-reporting).
Embezzlement	It refers to steal, misdirect or misappropriate funds or assets placed in one's trust or under one's control. From a legal point of view, embezzlement need not necessarily be or involve corruption.
Facilitation payment	A small payment, also called a "speed" or "grease" payment, made to secure or accelerate the performance of a routine or necessary action to which the payer has legal or other entitlement.
Fraud	Fraud means intentionally and dishonestly deceiving someone in order to gain an unfair or illegal advantage (financial, political or otherwise).
Collusion	An arrangement between 2 or more parties designed to achieve an improper purpose, including influencing improperly the actions of another party is called collusion.
Extortion	This is the act of impairing or harming, or threatening to impair or harm, directly or indirectly, any party or the property of the party to influence improperly the actions of a party.
Patronage, clientism and nepotism	Patronage at its core means the support given by a sponsor. In government, it refers to the practice of appointing people directly.

III. CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN INDIA

1. Lack of effective management and organisation: Due to mismanagement and misorganisation, there is a weak control on various departments and their working which leads to lack of coordination and control among departments and levels of organisation. This uncontrolled and unsupervised management allows corruption on a large scale. Besides, appointment of inefficient and incapable managers, executives on various levels of hierarchy

also leads to mismanagement and misorganisation. The only cause of this wrong appointment is corruption. Hence, corruption breeds corruption.

2. Lack of economical stability: Economical crisis and price hike are major causes of corruption. Economical crisis leads to unemployment and change in standard of living. It develops a feeling of insecurity in the minds of affected people. Most of the people don't have the patience and courage to face this situation. In order to regain their employment, maintain standard of living and status, this affected people engage themselves in illegal and immoral activities. They use various illegal short cuts for achieving them. They do not want to work hard again for achieving the same position and post.

3. Lack of effective leadership: Good leaders can only lead others towards growth, development and progress who play significant role in eradication of social evils. In India, there is tremendous shortage of good leaders who convey message of citizens to the management and government. They lead the people against corruption and social evils. A country cannot survive without honest and sincere leaders. There is urgent need of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Anna Hazares and Medha Patkars.

4. Lack of support: There are a few good leaders in India who really strive hard to eradicate corruption from the society. But due to lack of support and cooperation from people, the voice and efforts of these great leaders are often suppressed. People of India are more concerned with their life than the development and protection of their country against social evils. Many citizens have accepted corruption as a part of their life and think that it is useless and waste of time to support leaders against corruption.

5. Lack of values: Home and educational institution play a significant role in character building of citizens. Moral values are only taught in most of these institutions. But, they are not properly inculcated in an individual which forms the basic cause of corruption. Many parents and teachers do not practice what they preach. Hence, their preaching does not bring out desired results. If parents are corrupt, it is more likely that children will also become corrupt. Children learn from their parents.

6. Lack of love for country: Due to rapid modernisation and globalisation, people are becoming more and more selfish and are only concerned with self enrichment and wealth accumulation. The only objective of many Indians is to become rich as soon as possible. They consider themselves as patriotic just by celebrating Independence and Republic Day and don't know the real meaning of patriotism. They are not concerned with development of nation and rights of others. Due to this attitude, they easily get involved in corruption and immoral

activities. It has been seen that during strike and protests, many politically affiliated citizens damage and destroy public property.

7. Lack of proper system: In India, corruption exists at all levels and areas of system. Very few honest people survive in this corrupt system. Those who raise their voice against corruption are either killed or forced to resign thus accelerating the growth of corruption. Most of the people involved in Indian system have accepted corruption as part and parcel of their duties. They don't have any hatred or ill-feeling towards corruption. They think that without it, they cannot survive and sustain in this system where these systems are interrelated and interdependent. As a result, corruption spreads like tumour in all the systems.

8. Lack of satisfaction: Non-satisfaction leads to greed. People are not satisfied with their current status, position and wealth, dreaming to become millionaire in a short span of time. Growth and richness is not bad. But it is sad to see that the Indians are adopting illegal and immoral ways to achieve them. Many Indians are engaged in unhealthy competitions of wealth accumulation with relatives, colleagues and neighbours.

9. Lack of autonomy: Establishment and expansion of private and business sector depend on politician's approval. Many politicians misuse their authority and power. They have only one criterion for approval "Pay us otherwise you will not get paid". Entrepreneurs consider bribery as tax like other official taxes which has become necessary for the establishment of organisation. Due to bribe, companies and contractors secure contracts and government projects. Good quotations and work of company are not considered to be the criteria for securing contracts.

10. Lack of good control and vigilance: In India, some agencies are working day and night to stop corruption. But some officials of these agencies get tempted towards illegal commissions and leave corrupt people without any penalty and punishment. To keep a check on crores of people, more agencies and more honest officials are required. Hence, there is a tremendous shortage of these agencies and officials in India which results in lack of control and vigilance on illegal activities.

11. Lack of good remuneration: In private sector, employer decides the salary and employment benefits. He has the complete freedom and there is no pressure on him from government. Due to this fact, many employers pay less for more work and easily exploit employees of their companies. Even their working conditions are worse. Employee does not have any social security and retirement benefits. Employees get frustrated and adopt illegal means to make their earnings better and secure the future.

12. Lack of employment: Many unemployed educated youth fall prey to corruption. They are willing to pay huge amount for jobs. Many employer take undue advantage of this situation. They take bribe and give appointment letters then the appointed employee uses all means (legal and illegal) to recover his lost money as early as possible. Hence, Corruption breeds corruption. When these employees achieve power and authority, they take bribe from candidates for jobs and this chain of corruption continues from generation to generation without any check and control.

13. Lack of seats and educational institutions: In order to fulfill dreams and ambitions of their children, parents pay huge donation to secure admission for their children. Hence, the basis of admission is not merit but money. Management use maximum utilisation of quota granted to them. Every year there is an increase in donation amount. Prosperous students who secure less percentage in examinations, easily get admissions by paying huge donations. Poor students who had secured good percentage struggle day and night to get admissions. Many a times their efforts go in vain due to lack of seats and more number of applicants.

IV. THEORIES THAT EXPLAIN CORRUPTION

As corruption is a complex phenomenon, no theory explains it all. This part reviews the main theories used to explain why corruption occurs.

1. Principal-agent theory

The desire for personal gain is understood as the primary cause of public sector corruption, but this is an over-simplification of the complex relationships between individuals and the State. The principal-agent model assumes that agents (public officials) serve to protect the interests of the principal (whether the public, parliament, or supervisors). However, in reality, the interests of the agents often wander from the interests of the principal. While the former can prescribe the pay-off rules in the principal-agent relationship, there is informational asymmetry to the advantage of the agent, which could be used by him or her for personal benefit.

2. Collective action theory

For decades, the economic literature referred to the principal-agent model to explain corruption. This theory goes beyond traditional principal-agent relationships and emphasizes the importance on factors like trust and how individuals perceive the behaviour of others. When corruption becomes a social norm, everyone starts seeing it simply as the way to get things done. People are aware of the negative consequences of widespread corruption, but they engage in corrupt actions as they believe that "it doesn't make sense to be the only honest person in a corrupt system". In such an environment, anti-corruption measures based on the principal-agent

model will not be effective, as there are no "principled principals" who will enforce anti-corruption norms. To combat corruption in these circumstances, there is a need for collective and coordinated approaches, such as reform coalitions or proactive alliances of like-minded organizations often called "collective action" initiatives.

3. Institutional theory

Institutional theory also known as 'institutionalism', uses country and government institutional characteristics like pre-existing rule of law, well-defined anti-corruption norms and independent anti-corruption institutions with enforcement powers, to explain corruption in the public sector. This theory examines the processes and mechanisms by which structures, schemas, rules, and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour. Institutional theory considers that corruption is influenced by the character, design and transparency of the political system and its institutions. It also acknowledges that the relationship between corruption, institutions, political systems, culture and gender is highly complex.

4. Game theory

Another theory that explains the prevalence of public sector corruption is the game theory. This theory seeks to provide rationales for corrupt decisions by public officials. In this context, individuals face a "prisoner's dilemma", which "illustrates a conflict between individual and group rationality". The individual fears a disadvantage if she refuses to engage in corrupt practices while other individuals do not refuse to do so in the same situation. As a result, all individuals obtain some sort of benefit which is always less than the benefit that each of them would have obtained if they refused to engage in corrupt practices. It should also be noted that various situational and psychological factors could play a role in fostering unethical behaviour, sometimes despite an individual's best intentions to act ethically.³

Corruption equation

A corruption equation can be set out:

$$C = R + D - A$$

C stands for corruption

R – economic rent

³ UNODC. 2021. *Anti-Corruption Module 4 Key Issues: Theories that Explain Corruption*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/anti-corruption/module-4/key-issues/theories-that-explain-corruption.html>> [Accessed 9 August 2021].

D – discretionary powers and

A – accountability

The equation states that the more opportunities for economic rent (R) exist in a country, the larger will be the corruption. Similarly, the greater the discretionary powers (D) granted to administrators, the greater will be the corruption. However, the more administrators are held accountable (A) for their actions, the less will be the corruption, and hence a minus sign in front of A.⁴

Levels

Although corruption can occur at a variety of levels, attention has usually been directed at only two –

- The high and
- The low

These are believed to reinforce each other.

High level corruption refers to misconduct at the top and by leading politicians. Instead, greed is considered a main motivating factor. Example - in some countries, a politician is required by tradition to present an expensive gift at a wedding involving a supporter in his electoral district. When such a community has a large number of wedding receptions, birthday parties, anniversaries, celebrations, rituals, festivals, and fund raising ceremonies for all sorts of worthy causes, the financial burden of these festivities can fall heavily on elected officials. Hence, there are economic, political, social and cultural imperatives that motivate higher level bureaucrats to engage in rent seeking activities.

At the other end, low level corruption – such as the underhand payment that has to be made to a clerk to expedite the issue of a driving license. In this case the general perception is that civil servants with insufficient salaries to meet the living expenses of their families are driven by necessity to engage in corrupt practices.

But there is no hard evidence to suggest that low level public employees are less greedy than their superiors.

The line between “need driven” and “greed driven” corruption is hard to draw and it is difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins. Thus, there are those who believe that increasing pay without other complementary measures is not likely to have a significant impact

⁴ Myint, U., 2021. *CORRUPTION: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND CURES*. [online] Unescap.org. Available at: <<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/apdj-7-2-2-Myint.pdf>> [Accessed 9 August 2021].

on reducing corruption. On the contrary, the cost to the government budget of paying employees more, may be much larger than the benefit that may result from reduced corruption.⁵

(A) International dimensions

But why should advanced countries be concerned about corruption in poor countries? One good reason is that with the ending of the cold war, there is less need for major donors to be distributing aid based on political considerations. As a result, other considerations such as whether aid is properly used, whether it is benefiting the people for whom it is intended (such as the poor) are gaining prominence. A perception among donors is that the effectiveness of aid has been much reduced due to corruption. Aid giving countries, as well as the IMF and World Bank, are devoting increased attention to this matter in dispensing aid. Aside from aid effectiveness, greater integration of world financial markets and advanced technology have made it possible to transfer millions of dollars from one country to another by a mere click of a computer mouse button. Consequently, corruption has gone international and high-tech. Like terrorism, the drug menace, AIDS, and environmental degradation, it is one of those problems that has no respect for national boundaries. As such, the need for an international response to it has become evident.⁶

(B) International Treaties Dealing with Corruption

1. African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption: Treaty was concluded by the African Union which creates "mechanisms required to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and related offences in the public and private sectors."
2. Agreement Establishing the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)
3. Civil Law Convention on Corruption: this was concluded by the Council of Europe, the convention attempts to define common international rules in the field of civil law and corruption.
4. Criminal Law Convention on Corruption: it was concluded by the Council of Europe, this treaty aims to coordinate criminalisation of a large number of corrupt practices among members. It also provides for complementary criminal law measures and for improved international co-operation in the prosecution of corruption offences.
5. Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption: This Protocol extends the scope of the Convention to arbitrators in commercial, civil and other matters, as

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

well as to jurors, thus complementing the Convention's provisions aimed at protecting judicial authorities from corruption.

6. Inter-American Convention Against Corruption: This OAS treaty commits member states to criminalize certain acts of corruption, establishes a set of measures designed to prevent foreign bribery, and strengthens cooperation between OAS member states against bribery.

7. OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions

8. United Nations Convention against Corruption

9. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols

10. United Nations Declaration Against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions

V. 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). It lost billions and billions dollars of money in various scams. India is dependent on international loans, grants and favours due to this tremendous of wealth in corruption, instead of becoming independent affluent nation.

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 unless corruption is not eradicated from the country. Many developmental projects are taking unnecessary time for their completion due to corruption. Since, many officials consider these projects as special 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 etc. Many scientists do not have latest equipments and technology for their research and development, sportsmen do not have proper facilities, equipments, coaching and training, many doctors lack specialized, modern skills of treatment and diagnosis. There are scams and corruption in defence deals.

4. Poverty: Government is unable to eradicate poverty because of corruption. Rich are becoming richer by snatching the rights and wealth of poor and poor are becoming poorer. Various packages, reservations and compensations for poor people, minorities and backward community are announced by government but these disadvantaged sections of society hardly get any benefits. 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, many faults and weaknesses in system and management come up. These faults gets 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 is serving developed nations which are a tremendous loss for India. Since, we cannot become a developed nation without the contribution of talented and creative people.

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 these departments get engaged in corrupt activities, there is no control on crimes and brutal killings. Criminals are given freedom and victims are tortured. Besides, corruption also leads to injustice. Injustice gives birth to crimes and anti social activities and the 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 which leads to raise suicides cases among farmers, candidates fulfill 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 develop feeling of revenge against culprits. As a result, the victims become culprits by engaging themselves in anti-social activities which corrodes the healthy social fabric of nation.

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

As we know that corruption is the greatest hindrance in regard to country's progress. Therefore it has to be eliminated from the society. We know there are various causes which are responsible for the existence of corruption in India but we should try to eradicate such loopholes to stand in a corruption free society. Therefore certain remedies can be suggested to

eliminate corruption from the society.

1. Value education: Parents and teachers should inculcate moral values in children. Practice is more persuasive than preaching. They should set themselves as a models of good behavior, 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, quick and active in their duties. They should not delay their investigation and inspection. Since, this delay 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, strive hard to eradicate corruption, report cases of corruption to vigilance department immediately without delay. Merely reporting the evil practice is not sufficient for its complete eradication, they should follow up the cases as well.

4. Strong and Effective leadership and administration: All those who are granted powers and authority by people should fulfill their promises and pledge, struggle their extreme 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. 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, educate people against corruption. 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 organisation: Non- government organisations should work in coordination with people and vigilance departments for prevention of illegal activities, 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 and the 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. Accountability: It should be made mandatory for each and every officials and ministers to be accountable for their activities during their course of performance of their duty.

11. 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.

12. Serials and films: Films are powerful medium of mass communication which has powerful influence and widespread appeal. It can be used to create public opinion against corruption. Producers should make certain popular serials and movies having different episodes dealing with various types of corruption and their cures.

13. 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 and report irregularities to the higher authorities without delay, if any.

14. Religious sermon: In India, people show very strict adherence to their faith and belief being very sensitive towards religion, place of worship and religious leaders. They have deep attachment and great respect for preachers and spiritual orators and try to adopt the teachings of their spiritual leaders in everyday life. Hence, religious leaders should give talks against corruption.

15. Loyalty and patriotism: Every citizen of India should become patriotic in true sense by giving priority and preference to the development of his nation. He should always remain loyal to their beautiful culture, ethics and country. It is the work of the social workers, political leaders, media and teachers to imprint true patriotism in the citizens of India.

16. Dedicated and diligent leaders: There should be more dedicated, devoted and diligent leaders like Medha Patkar and Anna Hazare who 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 go-getting against corruption.

17. 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 and be united in their efforts against corruption.

18. Creative writers: Pen is mightier than sword. Creative writers should write appealing articles and books against corruption, interesting short stories based on honesty.

19. 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.

20. Gratitude: Indians 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.⁷

⁷ arman, w., 2021. *Causes, Consequences and Cures of Corruption in India*. [online] India Study Channel. Available at: <<https://www.indiastudychannel.com/resources/137016-Causes-Consequences-and-Cures-of-Corruption-in-India.aspx>> [Accessed 9 August 2021].