



## Corruption: The Bane of India

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**ABSTRACT:** The most important factor that is hampering the growth and development of the Indian economy is the deep rooted corruption. The country is paying a heavy price as currently we are not able to tackle corruption in every sphere of the society. Currently the ranking of corruption in the world is at its peak. Corruption has become so pervasive that people have become accustomed to paying and receiving gratification without any sense of remorse. It is high time that steps are taken in earnest at the highest levels of governance to tackle the menace of corruption.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Governance, Indian economy, Silver Lines

### I. INTRODUCTION

The prominent watchdog group issued its annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which scores and ranks nations based upon expert perceptions of public sector corruption. Transparency International ranked the world's largest democracy the 85th and 94th most corrupt country in the world in 2014 and 2013, respectively. India was ranked 76th and 79th most corrupt country in the world out of the 168 nations surveyed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The stink of corruption emanates in India today not just from secret deals between vily ministers and crony capitalists but also from media channels, the civil service and the lower judiciary too. The crusade against black money through demonetization is not likely to affect the cancer of corruption much unless accompanied by a host of other reforms in policing, courts and political funding too. Unfortunately, in present debates on corruption in India, some crucial aspects of the menace remain undertheorised [1]. While on the one hand a clear formulation of a long term and practical strategy to contain the ailment remains elusive, on the other, the increasing 'subalternisation of corruption' also tends to be overlooked. At a time when reports regarding farmers adding carcinogenic colors to fruits and vegetables, about dairies making milk from urea and detergent and doctors' prescribing damaging tests to patients besides electors accepting cash and liquor in lieu of votes are making headlines, the debate on corruption also calls for a larger lens now.

### II. CONTOURS OF CORRUPTION

The saddest aspect of our predicament is that most of us have got so adjusted to corruption that tainted legislators and ministers not only get elected in today's India but are also taken as heroes by their respective castes, regions and constituencies; not only have embezzlers of thousands of crores been accepted as CMs and cabinet ministers but even the most charismatic leaders in the states and at the centre have been frequently associated with massive scams. Whatever our outrage against a minister harassing a lady passenger on a train may have been, it cannot be overlooked that till he got exposed, he was able to mobilise support from not only his kin but also from colleagues and highest officials to evade arrest [2].

Our cultural preference for kin over state and for personal ties over laws has contributed as much to the problem as media sensationalism and poor conviction rates in courts. Indeed, if all guilty Indians were convicted together, many more jails would perhaps be required than ever planned for the country. Equally ironical is the fact that the arm chair critic, the idle but lucky inheritor and the official who does little besides blocking citizens' files would still be counted as clean in our unjust social order. Further, the state of India's legislating and prosecuting institutions is such that dangerous criminals may actually be more difficult to book or keep behind bars than ordinary

businessmen, hawkers, vendors etc [3]. The former may, in fact, use the legal process itself to tarnish the best of our public figures as well as ordinary citizens any time.

### III. FACETS OF LIFE AFFECTED BY CORRUPTION

Almost every facet of our life is being affected by the scourge of corruption. It is not possible to list all the facets but a representative sample is given below:

**Education sector:** Capitation fees, mass copying, fake degrees, scams in recruitment of teachers, question papers being leaked, have become very common. Where is then the question of producing honest and well qualified teachers who have been given the responsibility of producing students who are well adjusted in the society?

**Health sector:** Duplicate medicines, fake doctors, hospitals conniving with diagnostic centres, exorbitant charges, deny ordinary citizens from medicare and rehabilitation.

**Bureaucracy-Business-Politician nexus:** Business houses getting environmental clearances against rules leading to displacement of people and their livelihoods, ravaged environment leading to various types of pollution.

**Transport sector:** Fake driving licenses, fake pollution under control certificate, mixing of fuels, fake fitness certificates leading to accidents and deaths.

In this way there are various areas where corruption has caused great damage to our country. Even as our country is developing, is not able to make difference to the quality of life of the citizens in a real way. Every department is directly and indirectly linked with corruption and it is hard to sate the exceptions. In extreme cases such corruption is leading to high incidence of crime and terrorism.

### IV. THE SILVER LINES

Taking cognisance of these broader contours of corruption in India need not, however, impel a resigned attitude among us. The silver lines on our horizon also need to be carefully noted. For instance, we shall not forget that daily reporting on multiplying scams in Indian public life are as much a testimony to corruption as of new exposure techniques and the will and capacity of citizens and activists to blow the whistle. The system is still not that wrecked as to offer only silent apathy or the fatal outcome to the critic (as is the case in many dictatorships and banana republics around us). India is neither an Orwellian nightmare nor a Kafkaesque wilderness; our songs still ring melody and our jokes are not all sinister yet. Above all, many inspiring Indians, in all walks of life, still continue to perform with dedication, unmoved by the tsunami of demoralisation around [4].

### V. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO TACKLE CORRUPTION

An effective strategy against corruption in this scenario has to be multi pronged and not confined to drastic measures like demonetization of large currency alone. Just loud lamenting or uncalibrated state inquiries wouldn't carry us far either. In an ideal world, a call for swift, transparent and deterrent action against corrupt elements would have been enough. However, in our political culture, where the highest office holders also appear tainted and elections throw up history sheeters into legislatures, pious homilies for greater public morality would be of limited use. Some dent in the siege around us can be made by streamlining our reckless laws and procedures and by a more efficient use of emerging technologies [5].

The Right to Information Act is a sterling example of such intervention. Better salaries for government employees, growing literacy, digitalization of records, mandatory display of information, vigilante journalism and permitted tapping and filming of suspects have also been useful weapons in the assault on corruption. Another innovation which may help in restricting the cancer is wider publicity for the call made for anonymous complaints against suspects from colleagues, neighbors and relatives by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC); complaints which may be taken only as clues for investigation and whose follow up, once substantiated, should be available on the CVC or the CBI website. Besides this a comprehensive review of our laws and regulations ought to be commissioned immediately so as to decriminalize acts where possible and to reduce babus' discretionary powers to withhold or push file work. Excessive tapping can, of course, paralyse public institutions. Hence irresponsible complainants as well as work shirkers need to be made accountable under a not very drastic system of penalties. Another change which would immediately help in improving work culture in government departments is the linking of promotions as well as salary increments to work output more than seniority [6-7].

A considered distribution of honor and infamy is also a powerful tool for channelizing social energies towards collective goals. Europeans perfected this in the early phase of modernity. But our castes and communities do not normally dissociate themselves even from convicted members. In this context, it is all the more essential that state as well as civil associations institute credible awards for brave crusaders at various levels [7-11].

The thoughts of human civilization have changed and today people think money is everything and religion is of secondary importance for most of them. We must remember, money and power in the hands of few people makes society insecure and slaves in the long run [12]. Lastly, we shall not forget that threats which are graver than corruption are also looming on our horizon. An overwhelming focus on ill gotten wealth shouldn't dilute concern with alarming lapses in our preparedness for armed aggression, riots and communal tensions. Also, continuing problems of stark inequalities, massive poverty, a pathetic health, education and physical infrastructure, red tape and failures in justice delivery may not be making news everyday but their drain on our collective and individual potential is serious and avoidable too (as in many developed nations for a century now). All ailments fuel each other and deserve concerted treatment; an exclusive concern with financial scams and cash piles in the present push against black money, however, seems to be clouding other vital issues in our public life presently.

## VI. WHY CORRUPTION CONTINUES TO PERSIST IN INDIA?

In spite of many measures taken to tackle corruption it seems that the ground reality is quite different. Scams and mega scams appears to be a regular feature in our body politik. The main reason is that the CVC which is given the task to inquire into corruption cases is itself not fully empowered to do its task effectively. Some of the drawbacks of the office of the CVC are given below:

- CVC is only an advisory body. Departments are free to either accept or reject CVC's advice in corruption cases.
- It cannot direct CBI to initiate inquiries against any officer of the level of Joint Secretary and above on its own.
- It doesnot have powers to register criminal case. It deals with vigilance / disciplinary cases.
- CVC appointments are directly under the control of Government of India.
- Limited resources (financial and human) are there to check corruption in more than 1500 Central Government departments and ministries.

Therefore, CVC is relatively independent in its functioning, it has neither resources nor power to inquire and take action on complaints of corruption.

Even if CVC is made completely independent of government control other necessary steps given below are required:

- To free Central Vigilance Commission and CBI from influence from Central Government.
- Installing CCTV's in offices that have large public interface.
- Computerization of work of departments that deal with public.
- An effective grievance redressal mechanism system.
- Employees of CVC should be given training in yoga and should be given periodical lessons in spirituality.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Tackling the deep entrenched corruption in various facets of our lives is a serious challenge in our country. The resistance to any sort of reform from within the system is so strong that there are no quick fix solutions. Maintaining the status quo benefits so many powerful lobbies that making a dent looks almost impossible. Reforms need to be diverted in this direction to stop the corruption. At the same time there are honest citizens who without considering consequences are able to bring in the desired change. The answer to corruption is no corruption without any compromises.

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