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MAKING OF
CORRUPTION FREE UNITED INDIA
AFTER 75 YEARS
AS PROGRESSIVE AND WELFARE STATE

By
Major D S Bisht (Retd.)
Director Central Himalayan Institute
Dehradun (India)

This is the first comprehensive research study project ever undertaken with a holistic approach based on 40 years of personal experience and experiment which helped to study in-depth and record the present status of political, economic and civic governance in India after 75 years and recommend necessary structural, functional, legal and administrative reforms in all departments/sectors under GoI/state govt to ensure corruption free governance for development and delivery of public services to citizens of India with transparency and accountability.

PREAMBLE

Introduction

Let us start with the 'History of Corruption in India' by Shalini Bharti and Rochna Mittal published in International Journal of Political Science and Governance (2025). Abstract of research paper is as follows. –“ This manuscript traces the historical evolution of corruption in India, from Vedic age to post liberalization era in India. Corruption is an inbuilt system in the human mind, and it has persisted since civilization started. Corruption was accursed in texts like the Rigveda as a societal evil linked to poverty and deprivation. Though Kautilya's Arthashastra has no mention of the word 'corruption' , it is the most comprehensive and detailed text about various forms of corrupt official practices, detailing 40 types of embezzlement and proposing stringent penalties for each of them. Medieval India, under the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire, struggled with corrupt revenue systems, aggravated by decentralized governance and Jagirdari abuses. The colonial era under the British Raj institutionalized corruption through rigid administrative practices crafted especially to exploit the wealth of India and lay the foundation for systemic irregularities. Post-independence, the License Raj fostered bureaucratic corruption. Post-1991 liberalization , crony capitalism became apparent. India is still struggling to counter this system, which is deeply rooted in politics, society, and administration in various forms.”

In another research paper 'Corruption in historical perspective: A case of India' , published in International Journal of Political Science (2007), Arun Kr. Agrawal said- “One begins to wonder whether we are the same who rode to freedom with truth and sacrifice as our motto. By adopting an holistic approach and by co-opting all the principal actors in the process of anti-corruption reform, a country or community can enhance its capacity to curtail corruption to manageable levels. But none of this can be tackled without enlightened and determined political leadership, without high levels of public awareness and support, and without a motivated and well-led private sector. In many countries, the most difficult element in the equation is that of developing a vibrant civil society willing and able to play a meaningful role in shaping its environment.”

Keeping in view the historical background of corruption in India, this is the first in-depth and most comprehensive research study project ever undertaken by any individual or institute which is purely empirical based on factual information about governance with over forty years of personal and practical experience of public administration and experiment in delivery of public services at the grass root level both in urban and in rural (real) India. **The aim of the project is to examine the present status of political, economic and civic governance in India and to suggest necessary legal, administrative and functional reforms to ensure that India is not allowed to slip back into divided states due to inequality of wealth and increasing economic distress in rural India.**

The conceptual framework of the research study project has been broadly stated in the following paragraphs. It is well established now that the problem of corruption varies from country to country which is directly related to historical background, culture, traditions and the existing political structure and governance of the country concerned. Instead of routine research papers on corruption including index of corruption or cover stories on a particular incident of corruption/scam etc. holistic and practical approach has been adopted in this research project to study the existing status of political, economic and civic governance in India today at all level and in all allied branches/sectors of the government with particular reference to present status of structure, composition, role, manpower management, level of performance/efficiency as per rules/procedures, if any, laid down and the capacity to deliver public services to all category of citizens as per their legal entitlements with or without corruption.

The study project used all relevant information and data which has been in public domain during last 40-50 years for study and analysis to come to final conclusion and to suggest action plan to ensure corruption free governance with sharp focus on inefficiency, corrupt practices reported and known in each sector/department of the government. The study project has been able to identify the impact of inefficiency in governance which had adversely affected the performance of civil administration to deliver the public services to the citizens of the country without corruption at all level. The study project report is likely to serve as a valuable reference and guide book on governance to help people in power to ensure best possible political, economic and civic governance for the welfare of the people in a democratic and a welfare state like India through existing system of parliamentary democracy and in accordance to the constitution of India.

It is proposed to bring out revised and an updated edition of this study project report after every six months (1st January and 1st July) till such time we are able to see visible improvement in corruption free political, economic and civic governance in India. Large number of relevant research papers on 'Corruption in India and the world' published during 1997-2024, have been received by the author of this project by e-mail during last one year which have also been studied. Research papers are only for theoretical study of corruption in general. This research study project has gone into the present status of corruption in each department/sector in India today and to what extent poor political, economic and civic governance has failed to check corruption in India. The study project succeeded in identifying the mode and specific reasons of corruption in each sector covered in 17 Sections. Sector/department specific conclusion drawn and recommendations have been recorded at the end of each Section. Common recommendations to improve civic governance applicable to all departments for structural, functional, legal and administrative reform have been included in the Executive Summary of Findings to make India corruption free in due course of time.

The world is also presently facing the problems arising due to military conflicts for domination of one region or other. The conventional war has now turned into arms race for unconventional war to acquire latest technology to conduct air warfare with latest aircraft, missile, drone, cyber technology and use of satellite etc. Besides pandemic and climate change, it is bound to further aggravate, communalize and criminalize both international and national politics around the world. Internationalization of corruption and criminalization of politics will also affect adversely the peace and prosperity in this planet earth. Therefore, eradication of corruption, poverty and economic backwardness may not get the required attention till such time normalcy is established in this planet. However, delivery of minimum essential public services to the citizens as per their legal entitlement/human rights without corruption can still be ensured by improving civic governance with transparency and accountability in the country.

Origin and background of the study project

During national agitation for 'India against corruption', an article by me on this subject then titled 'Corruption & Lokpal Bill' was published on 19 November, 2011 in a local weekly 'Garhwal Post' in Dehradun. Since then, corruption has increased manifold. Today politicians, bureaucrats and others are being reported/arrested on a daily basis under MLPA and for holding unaccounted money/ wealth running into crores of rupees. Now even the bank and treasury officers have been arrested for pocketing public money including misappropriation of public funds without any fear. In other words, demonetization and Lokpal has neither helped to check growth of black money nor corruption.

The one point agenda i.e. passing of Lok Pal Bill will neither eradicate nor reduce corruption in India. In a country of India's size with population over 140 crore living in 35 states/union territories governed by different political parties who are totally independent to manage the affairs in their respective states, it will be difficult to put up a united front to eradicate corruption when no one government is free from corruption. Therefore, the present exercise to enact Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta bill and appointment, thereafter, has so far not given any positive results. In fact, the offices of Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta are becoming a parallel center of governance with additional burden on the state exchequer. The issue of corruption is being raised to malign the ruling party both at the center and states by the opposition parties only to gain political advantage during election and not for eradication of corruption. Whether the Prime Minister and the Judiciary is brought under Lok Pal or not, will not solve the problem of day to day corruption faced by the ordinary citizens of the country. Number of cases involving middle and lower level government employees are regularly caught and reported with unaccounted money and wealth running into crores of rupees which should be the main issue for those interested to eradicate corruption in the country.

It is often forgotten that 73 per cent of India's population continue to live in villages located in varying agroclimatic conditions where they have been practicing fair and co-operative means for their livelihood and survival from time immemorial. It is only the 20 per cent of the 27 per cent population (the lower middle class) mostly living or working in urban or semi urban areas who are facing the brunt of corruption in public services on the one hand and uncertain opportunities in employment, wages and inflation on the other. Unfortunately, some of the political organizations give more importance to community interest and linguistic brotherhood rather than national interest or supremacy of law of the land. Obviously, corruption is not an important issue for many organizations and political parties. Rural population in each state has their own occupational and cultural practices who are now facing the problems created by new culture of

corruption spreading in rural/tribal areas due to urbanization and the role being played by multiple agencies of the central, state government and local bodies to implement welfare and rural development program in the country without any accountability.

Over a period, we have innovated various forms of corruption in the country. There are ordinary cases of bribery or collusive bribery where the bribe giver and bribe taker together take advantage and deprive the honest citizens of their fundamental rights. The other forms of corruption adopted by the so called literate and the rich people are: tax evasion by collusion, managing government work orders including advertisements and execution of sub-standard works, corruption by government officials while buying goods and services (public procurement), illegal exploitation of natural resources like mining and forest, production of spurious drug / food injurious to health and violation of safety norms to earn fast and easy money. The most important issue that is being over looked is the corruption within government machinery. Bribery for recruitment, payment of salary, posting, promotions/appointments and for payment of dues at the time of retirement. Therefore, the problem can be addressed only by undertaking necessary structural, functional, administrative and legal reforms to check corruption in each sector and departments of the government at various level.

Governance issues identified to check corruption in India

Administrative and legal reforms should aim at strengthening existing law enforcement authorities vertically from top to bottom. The existing authorities and law include Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Comptroller and Auditor General of Accounts of India, Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) etc. which are good enough to check corruption at all level involving multiple authorities and departments of the government such as CWG and Adarsh building society scam etc. Corruption can also be checked if prompt action is taken under existing Prevention of Corruption Act which includes (a) public servant taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of official act (b) taking gratification by corrupt or illegal means in order to influence public servants (c) taking gratification for exercise of personnel influence with public servants.

Similarly, corruption in delivery of public services by various departments/agencies of Central/State government can be checked by strengthening and enforcing Civil Service Conduct rules/Classification Control and Appeal (CCA) rules etc. already in existence. Unfortunately, rules are there in the statutory books and amended from time to time but not updated and honestly enforced to regulate the conduct of government employees. Since government employees themselves remain ignorant of Service rules, the number of court cases between government employees and the government continue to rise in various tribunal and courts in the country. Hence, day to day corruption in public services is overlooked and delivery of public is either delayed or denied till such time one is willing to grease the palm of service providers.

Beside strengthening existing laws, corruption can be checked by simply making each head of office, exercising administrative powers, directly responsible to check corruption in his own office and subordinate offices under his control. The head of the office should either take action against the employees indulging in corrupt practices or report the matter directly to anti-corruption department/ vigilance authorities of the state for further action. If head of the office fails to do his duty, then action can be taken against Head of the office under civil service conduct rules which can also be amended accordingly.

The scope and form of corruption vary from department to department and profession to profession and therefore needs different regulating mechanism in each department or profession. This can not be done by the existing Ministry of Personnel but needs an independent ministry to eradicate corruption in India. The new ministry, if ever created., will have to undertake structural, functional and administrative reforms of all anti-corruption agencies including departmental vigilance organizations responsible for prevention of corruption. The people are generally ignorant of existing mechanism such as internal audit of accounts, vigilance wing under each department and police vigilance who can be made more effective and accountable after necessary reforms. This could check corruption at the lowest level and provide immediate relief to poor and helpless people living both in urban and rural India.

Making of corruption free welfare state like India

Now, that the issue of corruption has come to center stage, it will not die till such time concrete steps are taken to eradicate corruption in all walks of life which may take at least 5-10 years. How best this can

be done systematically without disturbing political stability, national security, day to day public administration, existing legal system and development of the country- is the key question before the government and civil society which are proposed to be studied in-depth in this comprehensive research study project which has been undertaken by Central Himalayan Institute to make corruption free India for the welfare of the people.

The aim of corruption free welfare state like India should be that the citizens are well aware of their fundamental rights, duties on the one hand and are given equal opportunity to progress depending upon their knowledge and skills in their profession irrespective of the caste, color, creed or religion. At the same time corruption free country also means that economically weaker section of the society and those living below the poverty line including disabled are not exploited in any manner by those in power or living above the poverty line and are given adequate security in terms of job, food, shelter, medical facilities and education without discrimination or bribe. This will be possible only when honest, dedicated and committed civil servants are deployed to deliver the public services at the lowest level both in urban and rural areas.

No comprehensive study as such has been carried out so far with particular reference to corruption in India. The issue has now drawn the attention of all countries in the world after the study was conducted by Transparency International in 2005 and recorded that more than 62% of Indians had at some point or another paid a bribe to a public official to get a job done. In 2008, another report showed that about 50% of Indians had first-hand experience of paying bribes or using contacts to get services performed by public offices. However, in 2020 their Corruption Perceptions Index ranked the country 86th out of 180, reflecting steady decline in perception of corruption among people. Transparency International report broadly recorded various factors which contribute to be the reasons for corruption in India. Major corruption cases reported in the media included Indians stashing millions of rupees in Swiss Banks and Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) having accepted that undeclared assets of Rs.20,078 crore have been identified by their office in India and abroad following the investigation till June 2021.

National approach to check corruption in India today

This study project has been formulated keeping in view all aspects of political, economic and civic governance which will be studied in depth for necessary reform to realize the dream of making corruption free India in the near future. People have more or less accepted the corruption as part of life which is not a good sign for the future of any country. If not checked now, it can even break the unity of the country and end parliamentary democracy. The symptoms are clearly visible. The people are seen taking law into their own hand and force the government agencies accept their demand or entitlement which is denied to them under the existing laws due to corruption and inefficiency in the concerned department. Government machinery fails to spot the corrupt practices within the government departments due to poor quality of civic governance, vigilance and action is only taken when the matter is reported in the media.

It should be a matter of concern that mostly the educated, rich and responsible people inside as well as outside the government machinery are found to be indulging in high level corruption today. Once the corruption cases are exposed, the rich people manage to employ experienced advocates to defend themselves and may even get acquitted after long drawn legal battle. The rest of the population remains neglected who have no choice but to bribe at various level to get all kinds of legal entitlements. The resolution was passed by Parliament some years ago i.e. (a) every government department adopt a citizens charter which will ensure time bound rendering of public services (b) Lok Ayukta to be set up on the lines of Lok Pal and (c) the lower bureaucracy be made accountable to the citizens through Lok Pal or any other mechanism. But so far no visible impact could be seen on the ground because no structural and functional reform of the govt department has been undertaken to implement the resolution on the ground at the grass root level.

Present and future prospect of the study project

Briefly, the ongoing study project is to examine the existing status of political, economic and civic governance in India today and its ability or inability to ensure corruption free governance for the development of the country on the one hand and welfare of the people including delivery of public services in urban/rural areas on the other hand with a view to keep everybody at least above poverty line and maintain human development index at the required level. Beside historical background, existing organizational set up and the level of corruption in each sector/ department of the government will be examined after documenting the exact mode of corruption with examples and the reasons will be identified to suggest structural, functional,

legal and administrative reform with particular reference to recruitment of manpower, deployment, training facilities, service conditions, pay and allowances of the employees to ensure corruption free functioning of the government department to deliver public services efficiently in national interest.

Further, it is also necessary to examine the present status of existing law enforcement agencies/ laws/ judiciary and suggest required action plan towards capacity building to reduce corruption in all walks of life. Similarly, lawlessness, policing and corruption in India will be examined and necessary police reform will be suggested to eradicate corruption. It is equally important that existing laws and mechanism are in place to protect law abiding citizens from corruption. In case of disaster of any kind, the ordinary people have to pay the price. It is, therefore, necessary that well organized and trained manpower is always available to care for the people affected by any kind of disaster. Finally, it is the human resource of any country who need to be given best possible citizenship education so that they can become independent and responsible citizens and contribute together as part of civil society and make India least corrupt like many other countries in the world.

While the bigger scams take time to reach final conclusion, the high level administrative and universal corruption can be dealt with speed through fast-track court to produce its impact instantly in the society. Appointment of Lok Pal or Lok Ayukta by itself is not going to solve the problem of corruption. Lok Pal/ Lok Ayukta or CVC may be necessary at district / regional/state and national level who should not only be responsible to deal with complaint about corruption but also take action to prevent corruption by constant vigilance and issue advisory in advance to the concerned authorities for necessary administrative action before actual corruption is allowed to take place.

There is a need to identify all corruption cases decided by various courts during last ten years, status of cases under trial in various courts and status of cases under investigations. This will help Government and all other organizations including media to adopt more constructive approach to eradicate corruption in India. Lastly but not the least corruption in the Armed and Para Military forces and law enforcement authorities, who are responsible for national and internal security, should not be accepted at any cost. Therefore, anyone found indulging in corrupt or undesirable activities within Armed Forces or law enforcement authorities must be punished promptly and severely in the larger interest of the country. Similarly Armed forces personnel and their family members should be given full protection from corruption in civil society and civil administration which will always remain there in one form or other.

The outcome of this research study project will help educate the people about the scale and volume of corruption prevailing in the country in all walks of life and to what extent it can harm the very existence of the country in future. Once the people are well informed about the corrupt activities of the people in power- the authorities responsible for good political, economic, civic and corporate governance can be made accountable and answerable. The importance of strict anti-corruption laws can be understood in correct perspective and the offenders can be punished severely through the court of law and black listed to hold any public office in future.

It is also proposed to test the following hypotheses during the course of this research study project and draw conclusions accordingly. (a) How and when 'truth' will triumph? (b) Is India presently or forever lost in political squabbles? (c) Does power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? (d) Can we ensure corruption free governance, economic growth and welfare of the people in a democratic country like India? (e) Are the present day rulers ruling India or fooling Indian masses? (f) Who is anti-national, those who are not following parliamentary democracy and constitution of India or those who are responsible for the slavery of Indian people for 1000 years? (g) Have we learnt any lesson from the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi to ensure integrity of India forever?

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Annexure-I List of administrative rules, manuals and orders etc. applicable to civil services

Annexure-II List of useful lawbooks to protect fundamental rights of the citizens in a welfare state like India

Annexure-III Names of only known welfare and development schemes announced by the central/state govt for the welfare of the citizens

**INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE STUDY PROJECT REPORT TITLED
-MAKING OF CORRUPTION FREE UNITED INDIA AFTER 75 YEARS-
(AS PROGRESSIVE AND WELFARE STATE)**

This is the first in-depth and most comprehensive action plan oriented research study project ever undertaken by any individual or institute which is purely empirical based on factual information about governance with forty years of personal and practical experience of public administration and experiment in delivery of public services at the grass root level both in urban and in rural (real) India. The conceptual framework of the research study project has been broadly stated in the 'Preamble' of the project report.

It is well established now that the problem of corruption varies from country to country which is directly related to historical background, culture, traditions and the existing political system of the country concerned. Instead of routine research papers or cover stories on a particular incident of corruption/scam etc. holistic approach has been adopted in this research project to study the existing status of political, economic and civic governance in India today at all level and in all branches/sectors of the government keeping in view the present status of structure, composition, role, manpower management, level of performance/efficiency as per rules/procedures, if any, laid down and capacity to deliver public services to all category of citizens as per their legal entitlements with or without corruption.

The study project used all relevant information and data, which has been in public domain during last 40-50 years, for study and analysis to come to final conclusion and to suggest action plan to ensure corruption free governance with sharp focus on corrupt practices regularly reported and known in each sector/department of the government. The study project has been able to identify the impact of inefficiency in governance which had adversely affected the performance of civil administration to deliver the public services to the citizens of the country as per their legal entitlement without corruption at all level with transparency, accountability and without violating human rights.

Beside historical background of political, economic and civic governance in India since independence, the project report contains present status of governance and its capacity to deliver public services to the citizens of the country without corruption. The study project report is likely to prove most valuable reference book for all stakeholder including teachers and students aspiring to join civil services as well as those undergoing training in the administrative academies of all the states in the country. The study project report is likely to serve as a valuable guide book on governance to help people in power to ensure first class political, economic and civic governance for the welfare of the people in a democratic and welfare state like India through existing system of parliamentary democracy and in accordance to the constitution of India. Piecemeal administrative reforms undertaken so far by successive government in India has failed to give desired results. The study project report can be used to fix national agenda duly passed by Parliament to eradicate corruption in India in about 5-10 year time.

There exists International Commission of Accredited of Public Administration Education and Training Program (ICAPA). The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) accepted that there is lack of high-quality education and training in Public Administrations which is facing complex governance challenges to contribute for sustainable development of the country concerned. The commission has emphasized on subnational governance and state level governance which was comprehensively addressed (except corruption) by the author of this project in an earlier project titled "Governance and Development of Rural India" sponsored by then Planning Commission of India and published in 2014. However, education and training program for the civil servants deployed for efficient and corruption free public services will differ between developing and developed countries in the world. And this study project report has succeeded in identifying all the issues connected with political, economic and civic governance at all level in India today to ensure corruption free public services for economic development and welfare of the citizens.

The world is also presently facing the problems arising due to military conflicts for domination of one region or other. The conventional war has now turned into arms race for unconventional war to acquire latest technology to conduct air warfare with latest aircraft, missile, drone, cyber technology and use of satellite etc. Beside military conflicts, pandemic and climate change is bound to further aggravate and communalize and criminalize both international and national politics around the world. The latest development of trade war between countries and internationalization of corruption will also affect adversely the peace and prosperity in this earth planet. Therefore, eradication of corruption, poverty and economic backwardness may not get the required attention till such time normalcy is established in this planet. However, delivery of

minimum essential public services to the citizens as per their legal entitlement or human rights without corruption, transparency and accountability can still be ensured by improving civic governance in the country.

-Major D S Bisht (Retd.) Research Scholar & Director Central Himalayan Institute, Dehradun (India)