



POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN INDIA: A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

DEVIDAS G.RATHOD

Guest Lecturer, Dept. of Political Science, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga.

Abstract:

Probably no period has witnessed in India such a hue and cry, both inside parliament and state assemblies and outside, on the roadsides and railway-tracks all protesting against political corruption since 2010. The problem of political corruption has assumed much bigger, louder and more severe dimensions than ever before.

KEYWORDS:

Political, Parliamentary, Assemblies, Democracy.

INTRODUCTION:

India is known for scams and scandals since Jeep scam in 1948. The major political scandals are: in the 1960s, Pratap Singh Kairon scandal for the use of office for personal gains, Nagarwala scandal-1971, Bitumen scam, Churhat lottery scam, Tansi land deal and Urea scam. Between 1980 and 2000, there were some headlines of major political corruptions and the impact of these scams were so powerful that Rajiv Gandhi and Nar Simha Rao lost their governments. Some of the scams and scandals are: Bofors scandal, Telecom scam, .1MM bribery scandal, Fodder scam. St Kitts case, Hawala scam and UP Flood scam —2010. The major political scams of this decade are Taj corridor case, Oil- for-Food program scam, and Cash-for-Votes scandal, money laundering above Rs. 4000 crores by Madhu Koda, Ex-chief Minister of Jharkhand .The latest being CWG- scam, 2G scam-2010, Coalgate-2012.....,

Look at the frequency, magnitude and gravity of political corruption These scams and scandals have been bigger and bigger involving billions of rupees, that too, one after the other have ignited a wave of “startling political awakening” among masses. Nadir Shah looted India, covers pages of history and taught in schools and colleges with scorn and hatred. What about the Neo- Nadir Shahs who are looting the country without any fear of Law of the Land?

We hope India to repeat history after Rajiv Gandhi and Narsimha Rao that people would defeat the corrupt governments and corrupt politicians through ballot in the 2014 elections and bring in, hoping so once again, that we would usher in a new era of a fair political system and a strong and corruption- free governments in the Centre and states.

A series of recommendations has been filed with successive governments on the causes corruption, its consequences and the remedies to tackle it. It is said “Commissions and committees are good substitute for inaction”. More the commissions and committee to contain corruption we had, more the corruption grew, with a little punishment to the guilty. Chairman of the Committee on Public Administration AD. Gor ala rightly expressed his concern and seriousness in 1 951 that despite grave and serious charges, say allegations. People holding positions of high authority remain in power without being cleared' of the allegations. This shatters the faith of the public in the functioning of governments. Corruption breeds corruption and it goes unabated and ad infinitum.

“There is a widespread impression that failure of integrity is not uncommon among ministers and that some ministers who have held during the last 16 years have enriched themselves illegitimately.

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The attention of the government was drawn by the Santhanam Committee, so constituted by the Government to find out the ways and means to combat and contain corruption in public life, submitted its report in 1962.

The recommendations of these two committees clearly show that the issue of corruption among ministers and public life has been highlighted, time and again, since 1950. We have plethora of Acts like Prevention of Corruption Act, Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Right to Information Act (RTI) and Lokayukta in some states etc etc. To combat corruption the Lokpal Bill was recognized as an imperative in 1967, was introduced about 10 times before Parliament during these forty-five years that too 'under seven Prime Ministers', but failed every time.

The story and dramatic scene under UPA-II in 2011-12 is another eye-wash and sad commentary to say: It is proof of 'Lack of Political WIN' to combat corruption in public life. The result is clearly written on walls: 'Public is frustrated and looted. Two, public is compelled to believe that 'the influential always gets away.'

The public find some ray of hope in Anna Hazare and Baba Ramdev Team and their non-violent way of protest. The role of the print and mass media has been highlighting on Anna Hazare-Ramdev duo's activism, measures and monitoring under the banner 'India Against Corruption', forcing the political class to accept in Parliament the urgent need to pass the Lokpal Bill.

Today, political corruption with one after the other scam involving multi-billion rupees, has assumed alarming proportion. Is political corruption a new phenomenon or is it local that we find it just only in India? Perhaps it is absolutely not. It is neither new nor local rather it is global. What is new in this regard is its demon-sized new dimension. Sheer lack of 'political will' to contain it and political degradation and eroded morality.

In short, it is the biased approach, political compulsions of some political parties supporting UPA-II from within and outside; and a willy-nilly approach by investigating agencies under their own control and supervision, undue delays in judicial and quasi-judicial decisions and above all a little follow up. A series of recommendations has been filed with successive governments on the causes of corruption, its consequences and the remedies to tackle it. The ultimate result is: A flop show and fooling the public here in lootocracy.

Public outcry is the outcome of public frustration against corruption, has sent shockwaves around the world in 2012. The crooked politicians and their crony-bureaucrats rig the system and loot a big chunk of public money and still hold and adorn public offices. It has crippled the Indian economy, the growth and progress of the nation has slowed down and the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. As a result of these scams, money is illegally amassed in local and foreign banks.

The people have awakened and coming out in the open to protest against the government apathy. Protests in many states quickly spread to unite people from all parts of society particularly 'Aam Adami' who suffer the most. Their backgrounds may be diverse, but their message is clear and the same:

'more transparency and accountability is needed on top priority basis from our political masters' in India as well in other countries. Organized corruption and political nexus is no longer invisible now.

Political corruption is not local, it is global in terms of its definition, nature and character. Corruption is a global phenomenon that has drawn increasing attention from scholars and policy-makers. The World Bank has assigned one of its highest priorities recently fighting corruption, and new NGOs like Transparency International have begun to publicize cases of bribery, embezzlement, influence peddling, and other abuses around the world.

The latest global corruption barometer shows corruption worldwide has increased manifold. Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) finds that when people were asked if they thought corruption had got better or worse in the last three years. The sample of 91,000 working men and women around the world gave their emphatic response. The response from 85% of Asians, 89% of Latin Americans, 76% of Africans and a headline-worthy 97% of Europeans was that corruption has either stayed the same or got worse. Corruption is everywhere. Corruption is universal. It is global indeed.

Another estimate by Corruption Perception Index—2011 in short CPI-2011. Finds that there are different levels of corruption in the world i.e. the surveys and assessments carried by independent and reputable institutions explain nothing but the level of corruption country-wise for 183 countries and territories in the world. It shows that corruption is a global phenomenon. Therefore, the public frustration is well founded. No region or country in the world is untouched and immune to the damages of corruption.

Corruption is not something limited to third world countries. Rich countries too were found involved in corrupt practices around the world. According to the CPI-2011, "the vast majority of the 183 countries and territories assessed score below five on a scale of (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean.) New Zealand, Denmark and Finland top the list, while North Korea and Somalia are at the bottom." In other words, more than 100 countries, mainly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, are defined as "highly corrupt

countries”, whereas most of the countries of western Europe are placed in a category called “very clean countries” in the world such as New Zealand (at the top). Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Australia, Switzerland, Canada.

Their score is above 8.5 but below 9.5 in the scale of 10, where 10 indicates corruption free country. The level of corruption in this small group of countries is 'minimal' and 'rare' what we call 'atta main namak hai'. On the dark side, in this large group of countries, we have categorized them as “highly corrupt countries”. The level of corruption here is neither minimal nor rare but large ever growing and frequent.

The worst and highly corrupt at the bottom (with scale index below 2.0 in the scale of 10) are the countries such as North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Venezuela, Brundi, Libya, Chad followed by Yemen, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Kenya, Uganda, Russia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mali, Nicaragua, Maldives, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mexico, Argentina, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Peru, Indonesia, Thailand are placed in the scale below 3.5.

India is no exception with an index of 3.1 scale of 10 as per CPI-2011. Add the wide range of series of scams and scandals of corruption, one after the other, which are highlighted by Anna Hazare-Baba Ramdev and afterwards Kejriwal Team and media every day since 2010. If these scams and scandals are included then we are afraid, we may beat the North Korea and Somalia—India's rank may not be the First among the worst and most corrupt countries in the world.

One of the most significant aspects of the interaction between political system and corruption has been the growth and spread of organized crime and political corruption. Corruption is often conducted on such a massive scale that it involves sums greater than the total resources requirements to remove poverty or make India a tax free country. The people know that the corporations and big business houses abuse their power to influence, buy and put-sue political aims with impunity.

Rapes, robberies, rowdies and murders are neither unknown nor infrequent. They remain above the Law of the Land. They think that they are Law unto themselves. May be on the basis of 65 years of history of shielding the corrupt and inaction since India's independence. The coalition government UPA-II at the Centre is preventing the honest prime minister to take any stern action against his own corrupt—politicians or ministers. The political parties take advantage of the political compulsions in lieu of their support from within or outside, thus saving that government from collapse.

They run or tolerate trade of contraband drugs, illegal gambling clubs: share 'benami' in genuine or bogus companies brew illegal liquor: 'arrange' No Objection Certificates (NOCs) and Change of Land Use (CLU) for their interest in residential and commercial property, grab public or 'shamlats', or poor man's land. sell or auction votes in Parliament and state assemblies; control and monitor investigating agencies, illegal gratifications, handsome commission in local and foreign deals, maintain illegal cartels which distort prices in the construction, communication, transport and mining businesses; and generally conduct extra-legal activities. The news channel and the newspapers come out with juicy stories every morning, every day in and out.

Wonderful! look the entire world is watching us, we are under scanner and get astonished at our drastically falling ethical standards and the political environment and the innocent and poor public that goes on tolerating it for years together or still proud of 'Satya Mave Jate' and sing 'Mera Desh Mahaan'. How diplomatically and politically, our politicians define, redefine, interpret, analyze, conclude, even close or burn the case-files so easily to save their own people and shield corrupt practices.

They do not hesitate to erode or dethrone the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) to avoid criticism and thus save their skin and image of their political party. India's image on tackling corruption seems to have gone down from bad to worse, with India's rank slipping from 72 among 180 countries in 2007 to a further low 95 among 183 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI). India still awaits for 2014 elections hoping in frustration for a fair system and a strong and corruption free governments in the Centre and states.

Corruption is considered illegal, undesirable and unjustifiable because it causes inefficient distribution of wealth at the expense of 'aam adami' and hinders socio-economic development. Corruption is both a major cause and a result of poverty enhancement around the world. It occurs at all levels of society, from local and national governments, civil society, judiciary, large and small businesses, military and other services and so on. Corruption affects the poorest the most. In the words of Transparency International: “Corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary world. It undermines good government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to the misallocation of resources, harms the public sector and private sector development and particularly hurts the poor”.

Corruption is threat to India's as well world peace, prospect and security with some corrupt politicians at the helm of affairs, both in ruling and opposition parties, whose main focus generally remains on their personal and political gains rather than the larger interest of their country and welfare of humanities in general. The result is clear: tension and disharmony prevail. There are burning issues of Naxalism,

terrorism, starvation and lack of harmony among classes and the nations of the world. Despite the inflationary and recessionary periods in the world economy, the assets of some politicians in and outside the government, their favorites and near and dear ones (better we call them looticians) grow disproportionately. They turn their investment with or without merely Rs 50 lakhs into fortunes and fruition ranking worth Rs 300 or 500 crores, in a year or two .Such cases of alleged corruption are shielded and remain unfolded. They are “ours” hence are above suspicion.

Let the people cry out as louder and as much at Jantar Mantar or Rum Litla maidan or India Gate, or Bharat Bandh or stall Parliament. All this happens everywhere, without any exception of any political party. Corruption pervades everywhere. After all it is democracy, people have every right to speak, raise issues, and go for fast unto death. After all, it is real democracy what if there is some what lootocracy in world's biggest democracy we are proud of. Long Live corporates like DLFs. Let us all together say “No and Big No” to all such looticians and “Jai ho our Democracy”.