
Well Informed Citizen and Media an aid to fight Corruption

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ABSTRACT

Corruption has not left even a single field where it is not present. If we don't find a solution to a problem the easiest way out is to give money and get it done, but is this what our age-old ethics have taught us? Certainly not, but what makes us do all these things is the lack of motivation to achieve something in life on our own. Humans are the best creation of god to date but are we really proving this saying?

INTRODUCTION

A free press is not a luxury. A free press is at the absolute core of equitable development because if you cannot enfranchise poor people if they do not have a right to expression if there is no searchlight on corruption and inequitable practices, you cannot build the public consensus needed to bring about change.²

Civil society and the media are crucial to creating and maintaining an atmosphere in public life that discourages fraud and corruption. Indeed, they are arguably the two most important factors in eliminating systemic corruption in public institutions.³

Although there are various means of information sharing and data delivering one such tool of information sharing is media. Media is not just a word rather it has become part and parcel of our lives. In today's time, one can't be expected of being unaware of the events that are going around him or her. Corruption is one such event that surrounds us in every field be it education, be it government offices, or be it the health centers. Almost all the sectors are severely affected by this rust which is affecting the mental body of our society and now it has become very difficult to eradicate it. The main reason it cannot be eradicated is, the sectors which are responsible for actually throwing it out of society are some way or the other involved themselves in the web of corruption. At the same point, weak institutional structure and economic policies have not been implemented properly.

If parents want to get their child admitted to a good school or college, they just pass the money from the other side of the table and get their work done. If a minister wants to form

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² James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank in a speech to the World Press Freedom Committee, Washington, D.C., November 8, 1999

³ Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank" PREM, September 1999

his government, he bribes the other ministers of the house and gets the suitable position in the cabinet.

WHAT IS CORRUPTION

Corruption in very simple terms or layman's language can be explained as the abuse of public power for one's personal gain or for the benefit of a group with whom one has allegiance and thus, in turn, hampering the social, economic, and political growth and development of the country.

According to the Black's Law Dictionary, "Corruption" means Illegality; a vicious and fraudulent intention to evade the prohibitions of the law; something against or forbidden by law; moral turpitude or exactly opposite of honesty involving intentional disregard of law from improper motives.⁴

Corruption can be also be expressed in a mathematical formula given by Klitgaard as:⁵

$$\text{Corruption(C)} = \text{Monopoly (M)} + \text{Discretion (D)} - \text{Accountability (A)}^6$$

Corruption is day by day dismantling the society, it is like a termite that is slowly and gradually eating away the structure of our economy, in turn making it hollow. The main reason for corruption is the personal gain or group benefit, weak institution and policies, people's greed for money and not to work hard and many more are in the line and thus as a result of all these factors the social, economic, political growth and development of the society is being hampered, it develops a sense of insecurity in the economies, and finally destroys the legitimacy of the state.

We often listen to television news channels telling about the mischievous activities in which leaders and celebrities are involved in as recently Mr. Amitabh Bachchan was highlighted in the issue of Panama Papers. We always see corruption from the perspective of the world-class leaders who are involved in it but if look at the other side of the coin even a common man gets involved in these acts to get his work done and these common man are those who criticize the acts of the leaders who are exposed for the act of corruption. The difference comes only at one point that the common man is never exposed to getting involved in such acts but political leaders and celebrities or say government officials are caught up by the media and are exposed brutally in front of the public.

⁴ State v. Barnett, 60 Okl.Cr. 355, 69 P.2d 77, 87

⁵ Klitgaard, Robert. "Bolivia: Healing Sick Institutions in La Paz" in Governance and the Economy in Africa: Tools for Analysis and Re-form of Corruption. Edited by Patrick Meagher. College Park, MD: University of Maryland (Centre for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector) 1996 (5) (PDF) The Media Role in Curbing Corruption.

⁶ ibid

WHAT IS MEDIA

Every morning we get up we first pick up our phones and see what are the updates in the different sectors of the economy be it, what are the fluctuation in various rates, what steps are being taken by the government in order to solve various problems, which political leader or businessman is arrested under the charge of corruption and much more. These updates we get either from social media, print media, or news channels. Earlier people used to get information about an event in a month or even later but due to the technological developments various apps have been developed of various sources or media that give us live updates of every second about what events are taking place around us. Media is the most important means of information sharing and is often given the name of a watchdog.

Media plays a very important role in informing and educating people about the damaging effects of corruption and exposes corrupt people and unleashes their true faces in front of society and the public. In the Indian constitution, we see that Article 19(1)(a)⁷ provides for freedom of speech and expression, this right means that both the people and information providers are free to express their views and ideas but it may not amount to some serious offense. A certain degree of autonomy needs to be given to media so that they can expose these people and make our country a better place to live in. Media helps people in becoming vigilant on the trending issues and motivate them not to involve themselves in these dirty acts.

ESTABLISHING A LINK BETWEEN MEDIA AND CORRUPTION

From the above discussion, it can be established that media and corruption share a very strong bond. Media helps in exposing corrupt people and also the scandals they are involved in such as 2G scam, Fodder scam, Wakf Board land Scam, and Telgi Scam, etc.

Professional skills and ethics, protection from abuse and suppression, and sufficient resources are required for the efficient working of the media, thus the law must put only justified restrictions on the functioning of media or it may fail as an information delivery system.

It's high time now and our national leaders and members of civil society must step forward to throw this problem out of the society from the grass-root level and take some concrete and hardcore steps.

Some effective medicines need to be sprayed to stop this termite from spreading into our economy and making our economy a hollow place. There should be effective enforcement of the law to ensure that people involved in these acts are punished and bring an end to the cycle of impunity. Reformation in the public administration and financial management is the need of the hour. More and more transparency needs to be instilled in the system so that it can

⁷ Art.19, INDIAN CONSTITUTION,1950

function smoothly and work efficiently. Make the Anti-corruption laws more stringent and binding on the people and anti-corruption bodies should also be established with a good amount of powers.

CONCLUSION

In the end, it can only be said that “Be the change you want to see in the world”. The evil of Corruption can be eradicated by the joint and collaborated efforts of the civilians and the system. We often say that now corruption is impossible to be thrown out as now it has reached the grass-root level and we do often say that the word “impossible” also says “I am possible” but how much do we implement this saying. When we point a finger at another person, we must see that the rest of the fingers are pointing towards us, this means we are much more responsible for the act than somebody else so we need to bring a change in ourselves to correct others.