

## THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON SOCIETY

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### *Abstract*

*Corruption is any abuse of position of trust in order to gain an undue advantage. It is a phenomenon that involves the conduct of two sides that of the person who abuses the position of trust as well as the one who seeks to gain an undue advantage by this abuse. It can occur in relation to public officials as well as between private persons. Corrupt practices can range from small favours in anticipation of a future advantage to the payment of large sums of money to senior members to public officials. The political, economic, social and environmental spheres of our daily life have been affected by corruption. Political intolerance, low level of democratic culture, the problems of accountability and transparency to the public, and principles of consultation and participation dialogue among others often manifest the impact of corruption in our society. Corruption creates frustration and general apathy among the public that finally results in a weak civil society. Corruption is not a good thing as we all know, so it is high time we all make individual and societal commitment to fighting it.*

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The political, economic, social and environmental spheres of our daily life have been affected by corruption. In political sphere, corruption impedes democracy and the rule of law. In a democratic system, public institutions and offices may lose their legitimacy when they misuse their power for private interest. The consequences that are negative in nature are brought in the society because of corruption for example encoring cynicism and reducing interest of political participation , political instability, reducing political competition, reducing the transparency of political decision making, distorting political development and sustaining political activity based on patronage, clienteles and money, etc.

Political intolerance, low level of democratic culture, the problems of accountability and transparency to the public, and principles of consultation and participation dialogue among others often manifest the impact of corruption in our society. The economic effects of corruption can be categorized as minor and major. However, both in one way or the other have serious impact on the individual community and country. National wealth is depleted because of corruption. Some of the problems like that of the increased costs of goods and services, the funneling of scarce public resources to uneconomic high profile projects at the expense of the much needed projects, diversion and misallocation of resources, conversion of public wealth to private and personal property, inflation, imbalanced economic development, weakling work ethics and professionalism, hindrance of the development of fair in market structures and unhealthy competition is often the resultant of corruption there by deterring competition. The economy is hurt because of the large scale corruption and it impoverishes entire population.

Looking into the social sphere we find that corruption discourages people to work together for the common good. Corruption creates frustration and general apathy among the public that finally results in a weak civil society. Demanding and paying bribes becomes the tradition. Civil strife, increased poverty and lack of basic needs like food, water and drugs, jealousy and hatred and insecurity, social inequality and widened gap between the rich and poor, are also the resultants of corruption. In India, corruption is said to be one of the reasons for the down fall of past regimes byway of undermining the legitimacy of the governments and weakening their structures, it is because of corruption that the productivity gets reduced, the development is hindered, the poverty problem worsens marginalizing the poor, creating social unrest and then to their downfall.

Sometime ago, corruption was synonymous to politicians so any time corruption is mentioned all eyes turn towards the direction of the politician out there. However things are changing fast. More discoveries are been made on many sides to the issue of corruption, and public is being educated on

the subject matter. Our perception about corruption for the past so many years has not done us any good; it has actually made us look at the issue in a very narrow manner rather than sort the appropriate remedy to it. It is high time we understand that the issue of corruption is deeply rooted in every aspect of our society, from the home to the school and to the work place. For instance, many a parent pay money to educational authorities in order to have their children enrolled in school, that is corruption. It is very true that many students while in school pay their ways through in order to make good grades and classes. Corruption has caused us losses in a great measure. Many of our public resources are lost through this diabolic practice by our public officials. Many government employees leave their posts before the required time for closing and yet they take full salary. Many come very late or do not come at all, and no one is complaining, their superiors are doing the same thing so who should complain. We must begin to look at corruption on a broader skill if we indeed want to fight it, we must not just be pointing fingers at the politician, after all the politicians are not the only people that engage in this evil practice. In one way or the other, many of us have received unmerited favours from someone before, being it in public or private office. This is what we have to start looking at. We must have mental re-orientation about this phenomenon in order to make the needed impact as a country. Corruption is not a good thing as we all know, so it is high time we all make individual and societal commitment to fighting it. It is our collective responsibility that can make it work. In order to fight this cancer called corruption, we must have broader base approach to the issues and look at it on a broader skill than just sitting and pointing accusing fingers. In order to fight this canker as a country and as a matter of urgency, I would like to suggest the following steps:

- Proper political reforms, including the financing of political parties and elections, so that we can all ask for the accountability from such political parties in relation to how they use their money and where they get additional funding from.
- Proper financial control measures such as, proper bookkeeping, budget, proper methods of reporting and record checking as well as auditing.
- Proper public supervision of institutions such as the media, parliament, ministries, schools, councils among others.
- Proper economic reforms, such as the regulation of markets and the financial sector.
- Free and safe access to information and data.

- Proper maintenance of law and order so that those found culpable are dealt with drastically according to the law.
- Improving and strengthening of the judicial system.
- Institutional reforms are needed so as to have proper check of our tax systems, customs, and public administration in general.
- The encouragement of whistleblowers and civil society organizations such as NGOs.

Even though we cannot make corruption disappear totally from our society but we can make efforts to restrict it and to protect as much as possible the ‘poor’ and the ‘weak’ in our societies. In the end, all corruption costs are paid by the consumer and the tax-payer. They need to be protected. Our perception about corruption must change completely if this will be made possible. We must know that it is less damaging in total amounts but it makes it difficult to understand why we fight the grand corruption if we fail to fight the small. Major chunk of corruption thrives on a broad base of small corruption-payments or bribes. Let us together agree with one voice that we are no more going to vote for incompetent politicians who will try to bribe their ways through, let us agree that we are no more going to give ‘gifts’ in secrets, let us agree that our country has suffered in the hands of many a people as a result of corruption, and let us agree that we are resolved now than before to fight this cancer from our homes to the work place.