

Present Anti-corruption Drive, Overambitious Expectation versus Ground Reality & Relevant Issues

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The people of all walks of life are indeed happy observing the ongoing anti-corruption drive initiated by the present interim government. Though initially some of them were sceptical, however, with the arrest of the national icon of corruption, the eldest son of the immediate past premier, it has been now ascertained the seriousness of the government in curbing corruption. Since the last decade, the all pervasive corruption like octopus has been encompassing all aspects of the society in such a way that even people could not imagine of getting rid of this national curse. The irony is that from the colonial age the high degree of democracy oriented common people of this region have always been struggling for erecting democratic government at the power centre but this time they have welcomed wholeheartedly an undemocratic government whose constitutional footing is still ambiguous. In fact, the rationality of receiving popular support from the common people for the present interim government lies in the inexhaustible involvement in corruption of the democratically elected immediate past political government. So, with aspiration of the common people the present government has rightly ignited its war against corruption.

But in this context the question is, how far the government would or should go? Many are assessing the situation with puritan eyes and advocating for total eradication of corruption from the country. On their part, this is no doubt a sort of day dreaming. At present stage the spawning of corruption has been evident to a certain extent that it would not be possible to uproot it overnight. Besides, down to the earth if we analyse the present socio-economic structure of the country then we hardly expect to establish a corruption free country without initiating a massive revolution with the people against the present capital driven market economy oriented social order. If the corruption implies social injustice then it can not be possible to eradicate at all, at least for this time, when the country is thriving towards capitalist society and participating in market economy policy at the state level. In this context injustice towards women workers in the RMG sector can be cited. The growth and success of the RMG sector in our country rely on the exploitation of women workers in different ways. To maximise the profit margin, the owners of garment factories are deliberately violating the international labour laws with the cooperation from the government machineries. Right now, the RMG sector shares the lion part of the foreign revenues earned from different sectors. Perhaps for this reason, the ministry of labour in a secret circulation to the owners of garments factories has assured that they need not to follow the strict rules of ILO. Presumably, this sort of policy level corruption sometime is unavoidable in a capitalist society. Even, if we shed light on the developed world like US and the UK, we will find the evidence of corruption there. For instance, declaration of fabricated lower turnover than actual one with a view to getting undue tax evasion by the business concerns is not uncommon in those countries also. At the policy level, on different international issues, the governments of those countries adopt corrupt policies even violating international laws. Should not the capturing Iraq by the US in the name of so called 'war against terrorism' be regarded a classic example of corruption? The origin of multinational companies lies in most of the developed countries and they are nurturing and propagating the corrupt corporate culture worldwide with the blessing of their respective governments with a view to exploiting third world countries and the consumer

group in general. So, in the context of this reality, we need to be realistic when we are going to address corruption. The essence is instead of eradication of corruption we should give stress on reduction of corruption to a tolerable level.

For this, the demand of time is to formulate an effective operational definition for corruption assessing the present context of the country. Doing business sitting on the footpaths in the eye of law may be a illegal practice but this should not be given priority as the people involved in such business may not have alternatives for their livelihoods. Rather, the cleansing operation of political mafia goons from the political arena as so far the government has initiated must be continued. The policy should be formulated in such a way that instead of fortune seekers, the real and dedicated politicians are encouraged to come in the parliament and party leaderships.

Though the corrupt politicians are the major entities who have put the country at a stake, the obvious partners of them are the bureaucrats. At the state level behind all crimes, if properly investigated the involvement of the corrupt bureaucrats would be revealed. In the past, the nation had witnessed that although some politicians, for instance Gen. Ershad, were trialled and punished for their alleged involvement in corruption, their counterpart in bureaucracy in most cases got escaped. In fact, the bureaucrats, in our country act in a manner as if they were awarded permanent settlement of Warren Hastings of the British India. The major beneficiaries of the last corrupt political government are in general the bureaucrats. This assertion has been justified considering the massive politically motivated promotions of civil servants at different ranks at the fag end of the BNP-led coalition government. Utmost corrupt practice in Public Service Commission over the last five years led to the recruitment of inefficient and below average people in our civil administration. Unless any preventive measure be taken right now, in near future our civil administration will totally collapse due to intellectual bankruptcy. So, to achieve sustainable outcome of present anti-corruption drive, the corrupt bureaucrats must be brought under trial. Besides, politically motivated promotion in civil service should be re-evaluated for the greater interest of the nation.

In connection with corruption, it is relevant to focus on the law enforcing agencies, especially the police force of the country. Virtually, in anti-corruption drive, the government has largely relied on this force. The endless corrupt practice of police force has alienated this force from the common people. The common people have bitter experience dealing with this civil law enforcing agency. Whereas, in the developed country interaction between police and public is sound and healthy. There the police mean friend of the people. But in our country this is just opposite. Here the police imply corruption, taking bribes and harassing the common people. On part of the job seekers, the major aspiration of joining the police department is to be rich within the shortest span of time involving in massive corruption. Using this corrupt tool how can one expect to reduce corruption to a significant degree at local level? The solution of this lies in the total reformation and reconstitution of the police service. Unless this reformation be done, a fruitful outcome of present anti-corruption drive would not be achieved.

It has been pointed out that the formulation of an operational definition is essential to make the present drive a success. In this definition, only the financial corruption should not be considered but ideological corruption should also be brought into account. For examples, the persons who are responsible for the destruction of our various constitutional institutions like Election

Commission, Judiciary System, and Public Service Commission must be treated like financially corrupt persons and be punished with appropriate measures.

In conclusion it may be stated that the sustainable positive outcome of the external drive against corruption can only be achieved if the government can ensure the people's participation in this drive. Social awareness program against corruption will also help in this venture.

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