

## Application of Buddha's Teaching helps to contain corruption in Indian Society

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### Abstract

Corruption is the burning topic of the day in India. It has become all pervasive. Political, economic and social fabrics of India are all vitiated with rampant corruption prevailing in the country. Common people have become victims of the widespread corruption. Out of 178 countries surveyed by the Transparency International in 2010 India's position was 87<sup>th</sup> in their "Corruption Perception Index". The situation is deteriorating fast year after year. Global Financial Integrity based in Washington has estimated that the size of the India's underground economy is roughly 50 p.c of the nation's GDP. It is estimated that more than 50 lac crore are stashed away in foreign banks. Many of the biggest scandals since 2010 such 2G spectrum scam, CWG scam etc. have involved very high level government officials, corporate executives, cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament. Under the circumstances the civil society groups led by Anna Hazare have launched agitation for a strong Lokpal Bill. This paper aims to highlight the worst effect of corruption in society and how Buddhist values help people to know the ill effect of corruption.

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### **Introduction**

India has been ranked at the 80th position among 180 countries and territories in the Corruption

Perception Index (CPI) prepared by Transparency International. The CPI, released at the WEF 2020 in Davos, ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people. Denmark and New Zealand have cornered the top spot, followed by Finland, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland in the top ten. Other countries in the top level are Norway (7th rank), the Netherlands (8th), Germany and Luxembourg (9th). With a score of 41, India is at the 80th spot. The rank is also shared by China, Benin, Ghana and Morocco. Neighbouring Pakistan is ranked at the 120th place.

This year's analysis shows corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals, Transparency International said. According to the non-government group's report, even in democracies, such as Australia and India, unfair and opaque political financing and undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups, result in stagnation or

decline in control of corruption. Not only are more than two-thirds of countries -- along with many of the world's most advanced economies -- stagnating, some are seriously backsliding. In the last eight years, only 22 countries have shown significant improvement on the CPI, while almost as many have declined, it noted. Transparency International Chair Delia Ferreira Rubio said governments must urgently address the corrupting role of big money in political party financing and the undue influence it exerts on our political systems.

### **Types of Corruption**

There are several types of corruption political, administrative, legal or judicial, financial, corporate, social and moral.

Political corruption arises out of the desire to capture or retain power in central, state and local governments. In a democracy it is the election that facilitates access to power. The process begins from selection of candidates by a political party to the formation of government by the majority party or coalition of some parties. In case of thin majority hard bargaining takes place to influence the members to vote in a particular manner in the legislature. Indian Parliament has witnessed allegations, with open display of bundles of currency notes, of huge financial transactions for buying votes of MPs. Political members to the upper house, making appointment to certain

constitutional posts and deputing to foreign countries on several missions.

Administration corruption is concerned with cases involving bureaucrats both higher and lower. Senior bureaucrats and heads of departments who enjoy the power of sanction lower bureaucrats who process the cases for their approval and Finance officers who release payment often demand illegal gratification. In many counties of the West and the East "speed money" are usually paid to get things done expeditiously. In certain law enforcing departments, specially police, allegations of corruption are frequently heard.

Legal or judicial corruption can be seen among junior law clerks working in courts and registry offices. Allegations of corrupt practices have been made against some judges and probed to be correct. We have recently witnessed a case of impeachment of a Supreme Court Judge in Parliament.

Financial corruption is evident in cases of violation of direct and indirect tax laws. Evasion of tax, amassing excess wealth over known sources of income, generation of black money, depositing money in foreign exchange rules and regulations are instances of financial corruption. Corporate houses big and small are often involved in promoting corruption. They tend to pay large amounts of bribes to the political and administrative authorities to get license for

starting an industry or business, import and export of goods and also to minimize the obligation for payment of tax. This is evident from the 2G spectrum case where even some Chief Executives of well-known corporate houses have been found guilty and sent to the prison.

Social and moral corruption are widespread in the country. These cases generally related to sexual violence against women, committing crimes after taking intoxicating drinks and various types of misconduct by official functionaries to capture or retain power in social institutions. Intellectual corruption may be included in this category. This is usually perpetrated by authors or editors by means of violation of copyright laws and patent acts. Corruption has even percolated down to the educational and religious fields. Extra payment for admission into a school or college and jumping the queue in temples for worship are some of the examples. Increasing number of matrimonial and divorce cases indicate the degradation of moral standard of common people.

### **Nature of Corruption**

The above types of corruption may be classified into five groups: (1) collusive, (2) extortionate, (3) nepotistic, (4) investive and (5) transactive. Collusive corruption means payment of bribe to get something which one does not deserve. Nepotistic corruption means undue advantage extended to the relatives and friends. Investive

corruption is a kind of investment that can help when future need arises. Extortionate corruption involves collection of payment by force. Transacting corruption is a smooth give and take. Broadly speaking, corruption is abuse of trust to fill pockets with easy money. Any abuse of public power for private gain is described as corruption.

### **Origin of Corruption**

Corruption is not restricted to a particular time or space. It is a universal phenomenon. Corruption in some form or other has been in existence since time immemorial. It is intimately related to some basic instincts of life. It cannot be totally eradicated but can be restricted with value education and rational thinking.

Materialism and consumerism have largely contributed to the desire to amass money by any means, fair and foul. With meagre and scanty resources of income most of the people cannot cope with growing inflation and rising living standard. To keep the status in the society intact extra money is needed and the easiest way to acquire income is through bribery. Corruption flourishes in a consumerist society. In short, the root cause of corruption is greed. There are other sensual feelings which goad men indulge in corrupt practice.

### **Controlling corruption**

Corruption can be checked by two means legal and moral. Both are mutually complementary. In

order to fight corruption the government has enacted a number of laws and regulations. Besides the Code of Criminal Procedure, Code of Civil Procedure and Indian Penal Code, we have a specific Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 with many other preventive and regulatory laws, rules and regulation. Apart from different law enforcing authorities such as Police, Excise, Customs and Income Tax Officials, courts etc., there are some investigating and prosecuting agencies like Central Bureau of Investigation (C.B.I), Enforcement Directorate and others. We have also semi-judicial and quasi-judicial commission like Central and State Vigilance Commissions, Human Rights Commission, Election Commission and so on. Now we are witnessing agitation by the Civil Society for enactment of a strong Lokpal Bill. In fact a Lokpal Bill is now pending in Indian Parliament.

### **Value Education**

Despite the existence of several laws and law enforcing authorities corruption has not ended in India's rather it is increasing day by day. In the background of frequent revelation of "ghotalas" (scams) it has been suggested by some social thinkers that India should go back to the system of value education as it was practiced in ancient gurukul tradition or Buddhist monastic system of education. In those days moral principles were implanted by "gurus" and "Bhikkhus" (teacher) in

the minds of disciples or students through recitation from scriptures. The students imbibed a set of virtues like truthfulness, honesty, integrity, love, respect, tolerance, devotion, gratefulness, forgiveness, fellow feelings, selflessness and service to others. These types of education helped in character building and served as antidote to corruption.

### **Relevance of Buddhist Silas**

In this context Silas or moral teachings propounded by the Buddha have special relevance. The five precepts are:

1. No to kill, or to abjure violence and hatred,
2. Not to steal, or to shed greed and excessive desire,
3. Not to tell lie, or to pursue truthfulness and honesty.
4. Not to indulge in sexual misconduct, or practice sanity in sexual life.
5. Not to take intoxicating drinks, or to lead an upright or balance life.

The Four Noble Truths emphasise the need for elimination of desire or craving as a means to end suffering. If desire is eliminated corruption too will be eliminated from society.

The Noble Eightfold Paths such as Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration when

pursued diligently by individuals corruption will disappear from society.

The Buddhist principles of Metta (loving kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (sympathetic or appreciative joy) and Upekkha (Equanimity) are contrary to selfishness and corrupt thoughts.

According to Buddha, there are ten evil actions and ten good actions. The evil actions are caused by deed, word and mind. Of the good actions mention may be made of generosity (dana), morality (sila) and meditations (bhavana). The gist of Buddhism has been beautifully expressed in a *versa* “sabbapapassaakaranamkusalassaupsampadasachittapariyodapanametamBhuddanamsasanam”, meaning not doing evil deeds, performing good deeds and purifying one’s mind are the true teaching of the Buddhas.

Thus, corruption first breeds in mind and then it is translated into evil action. The primary duty of a man is therefore to control mind by the practice of good or meritorious deeds. In this way Buddhist and Buddhistic moral principles can contribute greatly to the containment of corruption in society.

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