

Corruption

Corruption is rampant in India. It is like a cancer that is eating away at the innards of the country. Government employees are some of the most corrupt people in India.

Of course, not all of them are corrupt but a good percentage of them take bribes from those who approach them to get something done. One reason for this is that government employees in most states are not paid good salaries and wages remain stagnant in public sector companies for years. As the cost of living increases, people find it hard to make ends meet and they resort to corruption to make extra income

If you want to get a driving license or a ration card or a marriage certificate or a birth or death certificate, most probably you may have to grease someone's palm in the concerned office. There is corruption in every field. Political and electoral institutions are largely responsible for India being perceived as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Corruption among the police force and judiciary has serious consequences for criminals go scot-free endangering society.

Corruption in the academic field means that merit is ignored and mediocrity exalted. Politicians embezzle public funds and take kickbacks. Corruption reigns even within the hallowed precincts of religious institutions. It makes a mockery of medical ethics in hospitals. The Satyam scandal blew the lid off the myth that India's IT sector is immune to such things.

In short, nothing is sacrosanct when it comes to this evil practice. If left unchecked, corruption spreads rapidly. It also makes people resigned to it and saps their will to fight it. They become pessimistic and soon they also begin to ignore the law. Corruption causes inefficiencies and diverts resources. The poor are most affected by corruption. Even PDS rations meant for the poor find their way into the open market.

India's rank slipped from 72 to 85 (out of 179 countries) in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. TI is the global barometer of corruption. In India, corruption exists in the form of bribes, tax evasion and exchange controls, embezzlement, etc. corruption has many economic consequences.

It causes great loss to the exchequer, creates an unhealthy climate for investment and increases the cost of government subsidized services. It is not very easy to do business in India. Compared to China and other prosperous

Asian nations, the average time taken to secure the clearances for a startup or to invoke bankruptcy is much greater in India.

Recently, the Right to Information Act was enacted by the UPA government. A UN development report termed it the most progressive legislation in the developed world. This Act has enabled the public to demand accountability from government institutions regarding processes. But the power of the act has not been fully utilized because of low awareness.

One way to diminish corruption would be to increase pay scales of lower grade government employees. Also, there should be a carrot and stick policy to reward efficient people and punish corrupt ones. Increased transparency and vigilance is the need of the hour.