



Political-Corruption: Current Trend in Indian Politics

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ABSTRACT

Presence of the political corruption on a large scale is an important problem for the Indian parliamentary Democracy. Bank scam, Hawala scam, sugar scam, fertiliser scam, house scam, fodder scam, commission in defence deals, scam in the distribution of petrol pumps and gas agencies, Tehalka episode, coffin scam etc. Are examples of widespread political corruption in India. Political parties get huge amounts of money from industrial and business enterprises. Firstly, it is often black money and this money becomes a cause of disturbing factors in the country's economy. Secondly, the enterprises providing financial aid to politicians do not get wrong benefits from politicians. Besides, persons holding political offices misuse their power for their personal benefits and as a result corruption spread in public life. Corruption is abundant in every sphere of administration and it is this corruption that is eating the Indian democracy like termites from within. If adequate and strong steps are not taken immediately to solve the problem of political corruption, the speed of the decline of the Indian democracy will be accelerated day by day.

KEYWORDS

Introduction

Political corruption is the use of legislated powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain. Misuse of government power for other purposes, such as repression of political opponents and general police brutality is not considered political corruption. Neither are illegal acts by private persons or corporations not directly involved with the government. An illegal act by an officeholder constitutes political corruption only if the act is directly related to their official duties. Corruption in India is a major issue that adversely affects its economy. A study conducted by Transparency International in year 2005 found that more than 62% of Indians had firsthand experience of paying bribes or influence to get jobs done in public offices successfully. Transparency International reports about 40% of Indians had firsthand experience of paying bribes or using a contact to get a job done in public office. In 2012 India has ranked 94th out of 176 countries in Transparency International's corruption perceptions Index, tied with Benin, Colombia, Djibouti, Greece, Moldova, Mongolia, and Senegal. In 2013 India has ranked again 94th out of 177 countries in Transparency International's corruption perceptions Index, while Denmark, and New Zealand are voted to be the cleanest. Most of the largest sources of corruption in India are entitlement programmes and social spending schemes enacted by the Indian government. Other daily sources of corruption include India's trucking industry which is forced to pay billions in bribes annually to numerous regulatory and police stops on its interstate highways. Indian media has widely published allegations of corrupt Indian citizens stashing trillions of dollars in Swiss banks. Swiss authorities, however, deny these allegations. The causes of corruption in India include excessive regulations, complicated taxes and licensing systems, numerous government departments each with bureaucracy and discretionary powers, monopoly by government controlled institutions on certain goods and services delivery, and the lack of transparent laws and processes. There are significant variations in level of corruption as well as in state government efforts to reduce corruption across India. Let's have a look at those politicians who are facing serious charges of corruption in law courts. One hand we have activists like Anna Hazare who is fighting for a truly Jan Lok Pal Bill, and on the other hand we have persons like Suresh Kalmadi and A Raja, who have become blots on the image of politicians.

Suresh Kalmadi: the chairperson of the common wealth games organizing committee. He and his secretary general Lalit

Bhanot and other officer bearer were arrested in corruption charges in the arrangement for queen baton relay in London. According to one estimate nearly Rs. 7000 crores changed hands during the games.

A. Raja this politician played a key role in the 2G spectrum scam. According to CBI reports, approximately Rs. 3,000 crore changed hands with the spectrum allotted to favourites. He was also under allegations that he operated bank accounts in Mauritius and Seychelles, which were in his wife's name, to safeguard the money received from the scam. He was jailed in 2011 but later managed to get released on bail in 2012.

Mayawati. In 2012, she declared her assets which were approximately worth Rs. 111.26 crore. Her birthdays were marked as Jan Kalyan Divas and were a big glare for the media in which she came into view with diamond studded jewellery and garland made up of Rs. 1000 currency notes. Mayawati constructed a number of parks throughout the state, while the SC/ST were mired in poverty.

Lalu Prasad Yadav: Lalu Prasad Yadav has been involved in almost 63 cases of corruption out of which the fodder scam shook his career and marked an end to his chief ministerial tenure. The reports submitted showed misappropriation of approximately Rs. 950 crores from the government treasure. The scam involved introducing falsehood in herds of fictitious livestock which were used to manufacture fodder, medicines and equipments for animal husbandry.

Madhu Koda: The ex-chief minister was a poor tribal from Jharkhand who rose to become a millionaire with interests in mining in faraway places like African countries. Madu Koda is charged with possessing assets worth Rs. 4000 crore by the Enforcement Directorate, which to every one's surprise was one fifth of the amount of the annual budget of Jharkhand. It was also alleged that 30 per cent of the share of this loot money went to the Maoists. His money laundering scam was noted as one of the largest exposed scams of the year 2009. His two very close associates, Binod Sinha and Sanjay Chowdhary were also on the hit list of the I-T dept and Enforcement Directorate. Chowdhary managed to run away to Dubai and Sinha was sent to jail. Five currency counting machines were found at Koda's residence which indicated the amount of money he owned.

B. S. Yeddyurappa: This was a chief minister with a difference. The remarkable conquest of BJP in 2008 Karnataka Assembly Elections brought Yeddyurappa to power by making him the 19th Chief Minister of the state. He allegedly took undue advantage of his position and favored his sons in allotment of land in Bangalore. He allegedly purchased land for Rs. 40 lacs and re-sold it to a mining company for Rs.20 crores, fetching him a huge profit. He denied all the allegations and in his support he showed his assets worth only Rs. 11 crore which let him walk out scot free.

Sharad Pawar: The man who could have been India's Prime Minister is a shrewd businessman. He may have made his pocketborough Baramati into a showpiece with industries, educational institutions and the lot, but he personally owns a huge empire. He has been in power numerous times and has made utmost use of it. He has served the country in different roles i.e. as chief minister of Maharashtra, Minister of defence and currently he serves as the Minister of Agriculture. His affection for money is not a hush hush affair for many. His name was cited by Abdul Karim Telgi relating him with the 600 billion stamp-paper scam. Rumors have it that he is also reported to have enjoyed a good relation with the underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. Pawar has also been involved in the multi crore wheat scam. City Corporation Ltd. which made a contentious appearance during the IPL bidding holds names of Pawar's family members as imperative shareholders. The Lava-sa deal is the latest

Not only corrupt politicians, but also musclemen like Pappu Yadav have entered our legislatures so much so that a person like the late Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujaral had once remarked in Parliament that he had to look over his shoulders to look whether there was a criminal sitting in the benches behind him or not. The proportion of MPs in the 15th Lok Sabha facing criminal charges is not only high but actually increased between the 2004 and 2009 Lok Sabhas. The proportion of MPs facing serious criminal charges (like murder, kidnapping and extortion) also showed an increase from 12 per cent in 2004 to 14 per cent in 2009. Such persons are holding offices in political parties against whom there are several cases of criminal activities, scams and rape etc. Not only this, even in ministries, there are many persons against whom there are cases of serious crimes. A 2009 survey of the leading economies of Asia, revealed Indian bureaucracy to be not only the least efficient out of Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, China, Philippines and Indonesia, but also that working with India's civil servants was a "slow and painful" process. In August 2011, an iron ore mining scandal became a media focus in India. In September 2011, Janardhana Reddy – an elected member of Karnataka's legislative assembly – was arrested on charges of corruption and illegal mining of iron ore in his home state of Karnataka. It was alleged that his company received preferential allotment of resources, organised and exported billions of dollars worth of iron ore to China in recent years, without paying any royalty to the state government exchequer of Karnataka or the central government of India, and these Chinese companies made PIT was also alleged that corrupt government officials cooperated with Reddy, starting from government officials in charge of regulating mining to government officials in charge of regulating port facilities and shipping. These officials received monthly bribes in exchange for enabling the illegal export of illegally mined iron ore to China. Such scandals have led to a demand in India for consensually driven action plan to eradicate the piracy of India's mineral resources by an illegal-political-corrupt government officials-business nexus, removal of incentives for illegal mining, creation of incentives for legal mining and domestic use of iron ore and steel manufacturing. IAS officers who have worked on to put up a stronghold against the illegal mining mafia have faced severe backlashes from the government in direct and indirect ways in the past. Recent and glaring example of this is the suspension of the IAS officer durga shakti nagpal in UP after her strong response to illegal sand mining mafia in the corruption riddled

stateament to shell companies controlled by Reddy and registered in Caribbean and north Atlantic tax havens-

According to a third report, published in May 2012, Swiss National Bank estimates that the total amount of deposits in all Swiss banks, at the end of 2010, by citizens of India were CHF 1.95 billion (₹ 92.95 billion, US\$2.1 billion). The Swiss Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed these figures upon request for information by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. This amount is about 700 fold less than the alleged \$1.4 trillion in some media reports. The report also provided a comparison of the deposits held by Indians and by citizens of other nations in Swiss banks. Total deposits held by citizens of India constitute only 0.13 per cent of the total bank deposits of citizens of all countries. Further, the share of Indians in the total bank deposits of citizens of all countries in Swiss banks has reduced from 0.29 per cent in 2006 to 0.13 per cent in 2010.

Table 1: Serious IPC charges faced by MPs Lok Sabha 2009

IPC section*	Offence	No of MPs Accused	No. of Women MPs Accused
307	Attempt to Murder	26	1
302	Murder	17	
304	Culpable homicide not amounting to murder	3	
384	Extortion	2	
364	Kidnapping or abducting in order to murder	7	
124	Assaulting President, Governor, etc., with intent to compel or restrain the exercise of any lawful power	7	
395	Dacoity	6	
471	Using as genuine a forged document or electronic record	6	
332 & 333	Voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt to deter public servant from his duty	22	1
353	Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty	32	2

*Note: List is not exhaustive.
Source: Association for Democratic Reforms

The 2009 Lok Sabha has 76 MPs accused of multiple serious crimes with an average of three cases each. Out of the 37 political parties represented in the Lok Sabha, MPs from 22 parties face serious criminal charges. In 25 constituencies, the number of candidates with criminal charges was higher than the number of candidates without any criminal charges (without taking independent candidates into account). For the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, out of the 1,566 candidates analysed by ADR, 18 per cent have declared criminal charges and 10 per cent have declared serious criminal charges in their affidavits. Twenty-four MPs who had criminal charges against them and won in the 2004 Lok Sabha election, won again in the 2009 Lok Sabha election. Eleven current MPs facing serious criminal charges have been given tickets to contest the Lok Sabha election, 2014. Of these, Ganesh Singh (BJP), Naveen Jindal (INC) and Avtar Singh Bhadana (INC) won both the Lok Sabha 2004 and the 2009 elections. This shows that political parties continue to give tickets to candidates despite the fact that they have criminal cases pending against them..

Table 3: Years of Pending Cases, Lok Sabha 2009

S.no	MP/ Party/Constituency/ State	Details of offences	No. of years for which the cases have been pending (as per affidavits filed in 2009 elections)
1	Adhikari Sasir Kumar, AITC, Kanchi, West Bengal	Rioting and theft	28years
2	Ramakant Yadav, BJP, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh	Murder	25 years
3	Ramkishun, SP, Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh	Attempt to commit robbery	24 years
4	Gandhi Dilipkumar Mansukhlat, BJP, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra	Concealing with intent to facilitate design to wage war	24 years
5	Venugopala Reddy Modugula, TDP, Narasaraopet, Andhra Pradesh	Attempt to murder	23 years
6	Kameshwar Baitha, JMM, Palamau, Jharkhand	Murder	20 years
7	Abdul Mannan Hossain, INC, Murshidabad, West Bengal	Attempt to Murder	20 years

The Supreme Court decision means that a sitting MP will henceforth be disqualified immediately from parliament upon conviction in a serious criminal case. India's democracy, serving a population of 1.3bn, is the world's largest, but the country's national and state-level politics have long been riddled with corruption and vote-buying. Early reactions from Indian politicians were mixed. Some complained that they would face frivolous or malicious cases designed to keep them out of parliament. But the Bharatiya Janata party (BJP), the Hindu nationalist opposition to the incumbent coalition led by Congress, said it supported in principle any measure "that involves purifying and strengthening our political process".

A white paper on black money in India by the Government of India suggests two possible sources of black money in India. The first includes activities not permitted by the law, such as crime, drug trade, terrorism, and corruption, all of which are illegal in India. The second, more likely source is that the wealth may have been generated through a lawful activity but accumulated by failing to declare income and pay taxes. Some of this black money ends up in illicit financial flows across international borders, such as deposits in tax haven countries.

Scandal/scam	Scope INR crore(10M)	Key players	Summary
Chopper scam / chopper gate scam(2013)	3600	IAF chief shashi tyagi .brother of former Union minister Santosh Bagrodia, Satish Bagrodia and Pratap Aggarwal, Chairman and Managing Director of IDS Infotech in the case.	Investigations revealed that three persons related to the then Air Force chief Shashi Tyagi had bended the rules in the tender to help AgustaWestland secure the contract
Indian coal scam(2012)	185591.34	Comptroller and auditor general of Indian, the coal ministry ,many electricity boards and private companies.	coal blocks allotted, not auctioned, leading to estimated losses as per the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
Uttar Pradesh NRHM scam (2012)	10000	Mayawati, Babu singh kushwaha	Babu Singh Kushwaha and IAS Pradeep Shukla behind bars for their involvement in NRHM scam
2G scam(2007)	176000	Nira Radia ,A.Raja.M.K .Kanimozhi,many telcommuncion companies.	communication bandwidth auctioned for lower than market value. A. Raja and M.K .kanimozhi have been in Tihar Jail for 15 months and 5 months respectively
Uttar Pradesh food grain scam (2012)	35000	Mulayam singh yadav and Mayawati.	Food which the government purchased to give to the poor was instead sold on the open market.

As of December 2008, 120 of India's 523 parliament members were accused of crimes, under India's First Information Report procedure wherein anyone can allege another of committing a crime. Many of the biggest scandals since 2010 have involved

very high level government officials, including Cabinet Ministers. An analysis of candidate data compiled by the Association for Democratic Reform shows the degree to which criminalisation has entered Indian politics: 7 per cent of 5,380 candidates contesting the Lok Sabha election 2014 have declared criminal charges in their affidavits submitted to the Election Commission; 10 per cent have declared serious criminal charges such as murder and rape charges. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate S.P. Udayakumar, Kanyakumari constituency, Tamil Nadu, faces the highest number of criminal cases – 382 including 19 charges related to Attempt to Murder (IPC section 307) and 16 charges related to sedition (IPC section 124A). He is closely followed by M. Pushparayan, also an AAP candidate, Thoothukudi constituency, Tamil Nadu, with 380 criminal cases.

Factors contributing to corruption in India

India has high marginal tax rates and numerous regulatory bodies with the power to stop any citizen or business from going about their daily affairs. The desire to pay lower taxes than those demanded by the state explains the demand side of corruption. The net result is that the corrupt officials collect bribes, the government fails to collect taxes for its own budget, and corruption grows. Vito Tanzi in an IMF study suggests that in India, like other countries in the world, corruption is caused by excessive regulations and authorisation requirements, complicated taxes and licensing systems, mandated spending programmes, lack of competitive free markets, monopoly of certain goods and service providers by government controlled institutions, bureaucracy, lack of penalties for corruption of public officials, and lack of transparent laws and processes. By some calculations, politicians with a criminal record are more likely to be elected than those with a clean slate - because, says the ADR, they have more illicit funds with which to buy votes. Almost forgotten already are calls in the Verma commission report into the December 16 Delhi gang rape case for all politicians accused of sexual crimes to be barred from office. Instead, six politicians charged with rape remain in office. Arguably, of course, the government is right. Losing tainted local or national politicians - among them many accused murderers, rapists and fraudsters - could upset delicate political alliances and make it even harder to get laws passed. Corruption may lead to further bureaucratic delay and inefficiency as corrupted bureaucrats may introduce red tape in order to extort more bribes. Such inadequacies in institutional efficiency could affect growth indirectly by lowering the private marginal product of capital and investment rate. If corruption levels in India were reduced to levels in developed economies such as Singapore or the United Kingdom, India's GDP growth rate could increase at a higher rate annually.

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