

# Combating Corruption in India - The Role of Civil Society

Dr. Sunanda S. Shirur

Principal, Department of Political Science  
Govt. First Grade College, Hunnur-587119.

**Abstract-** The present study investigates the function of civil society in countering corruption in India. It highlights how essential a thriving, independent civil society is to bolstering democracy and enhancing governance. Poverty and unemployment are made worse by corruption, which is seen as a ubiquitous and destructive force in Indian society. The authors contend that through campaigning, public pressure, and voluntary involvement, civil society organizations may promote accountability and transparency. They stress the value of laws such as the Right to Information Act in enabling citizens and push for increased participation from civil society in order to effectively combat corruption. The essay highlights civil society's capacity to advance democratic values and constructive development in India, despite certain limitations.

**Keywords**— Corruption, Civil Society, Democracy, Transparency, Right to Information

## I. INTRODUCTION

An independent civil society is a vital to any aspiring democracy and can really help to consolidate it and raise its credibility both at home and abroad. Civil society tends to be voluntary, pluralistic, and participatory, and can serve as a medium through which the governed can organize, assemble, discuss, and criticize governmental actions or other matters of societal concern. Civil society organizations can be formal or informal, of political, religious, social, cultural, or ethnic nature. However, they usually exclude profit-making business groups, political society, and family or individual organizational life. It is important to note that civil society is foremost a "public sphere" where the public good tends to be pursued over primarily private gains.

Corruption in any form is treated as an incurable disease, a cause of many social and economical evils in the society and it damages the moral and ethical fibres of the civilization. Indisputably, it is correct that corruption breeds many evils in the society and once corruption starts taking place, slowly and gradually whole country passes through its net and gradually it becomes after sometimes an incurable disease.

Let us know the meaning of corruption, In brief anything that is below all standard norms of morality in a country is called and defined as corruption and corrupt practices. Sometimes corruption is understood as something against law; such as a contract by which the borrower agreed to pay the lender usurious interest. It is said, in such case, that it was corruptly agreed.

## II. CAUSES OF CORRUPTION

1. Emergence of political elite who believe in interest-oriented rather than nation oriented programmes and policies.
2. Corruption is caused as well as increased because of the change in the value system and ethical qualities of men who

administer. The old ideals of morality, service and honesty are regarded as an achronistic.

3. Vast size of population coupled with widespread illiteracy and the poor economic infrastructure lead to endemic corruption in public life.

4. In a highly inflationary economy, low salaries of government officials compel them to resort to the road of corruption.

5. Bulk of people in the developing democracies are illiterate. As such, they lack civic consciousness and do not clamour for the redress of their grievances. The civil services being more enlightened take undue advantage of the general apathy, ignorance and indifference of the common men. They indulge in nefarious activities without fearing the public wrath or mass denunciation. The public, in fact, is keen to shield such officers who are pinpricks for the government in developing democracies like India. People feel concerned only when they are individually going to be affected by the action of the officials.

6. According to the law of our land both the giver and receiver of bribes are held guilty. There is too much security of tenure assured to Bureaucracy in India. No civil servant shall be dismissed or removed by an authority sub-ordinate to that by which he was appointed. Moreover, no such person shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank until he has been given a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the action proposed to be taken in regard to him. Corruption is a serious economic issue as it adversely affects the country's economic development and achievement of developmental goals. Today the sets of politicians of all political parties are just money spinning actors just working to establish estates for their seven generations. The vision of a great India in the yes of the freedom fighters has been lost somewhere in our move in the last fifty years. Corruption has percolated to all levels and in all spheres of activities, and all this sure enough because it suits the politician. The politician has encouraged the bureaucrat to be corrupt, and in turn the bureaucrat has enjoyed the protection of the politician, in all his nefarious activities.

One of the most important ways civil society contributes to democracy is that it provides a means of participation for the masses that separates them from political society and governing institutions. Associations should be able to organize and assemble, treat of any subject that is conformed to the country's constitution and laws without being harassed or questioned by the government. Another element that must be present in a democratic civil society is voluntary participation. Citizens must be free to decide whether they join organizations and associations and how much time and money they contribute. In order to reach this level of autonomy, civil society is constantly struggling and lobbying in order to change laws and advance their interests. Ultimately this can only benefit democracy because it instills non-violent and democratic practice within a society and its citizens.

A democratic civil society is also primordial in an emerging democracy because it provides the following: avenues through which regular citizens can pressure the political elites to review or change public policy; a public sphere in which different layers of society can participate in a plurality of ways; a medium through which divergent groups (ethnic, religious, political) can discuss solutions without resorting to violence and extreme means. Also, a thriving civil society is important to democracy because an independent media can serve an important public good of providing information, reporting on government and associational actions to other organization; which is a good way for different groups to keep members of the government elite and politicians in check.

The Indian society in all its entirety is corrupt to the core, and now corruption is like a drug, without which the addict finds it difficult to survive, with this slow and steady and continuous spread of the fangs of corruption, today the situation is such that, there is no place of activity which is bereft of the fruits of corruption. The tentacles of corruption can be dealt with only with an iron hand, and above all, must start cleaning from the top echelons of society. However, as we have seen umpteen times, this does not happen. Our experience shows that, as soon as a big name is involved in any corruption case, there is a lot of hullabaloo for sometime, and it all dies down with the passage of time and the corruption continues unabated. How does this happen? This is very obvious for all those who have to be at the clearing end are brought, so no damage can ever come to the so called high ups. This main reason why there is never any *Render* if anything tangible can really be achieved for, the high ups cannot be touched, and the lower formations need to be touched - so we remain where we were at the beginning of any case.

Also with the voluntary all-encompassing nature of civil society, citizens will have more trust and confidence in their governments, thus circumventing passivity. Civil society can also provide services at levels that the government can't reach. This is especially true of religious groups. A vibrant civil society can serve to legitimize some democracies by showing an alternative way citizens take power in participation. In addition, civil society groups may help consolidate democracy by exhorting people to go out and vote in elections and run for office, and generally

advance peaceful democratic practices. Finally, I believe that civil society has a snowball effect in that it empowers people to think independently and fight for their interests. Once this is done, the same people can never be expected to have their interests and organizations subverted ever again.

Thomas Hobbes used the term 'civil society' in his *Leviathan* in which he propounded the theory of social contract that men could contract together in order to lift themselves from the state of nature to civil society. John Locke believed that men were naturally peaceable and sociable, and that rulers must not enjoy untrammelled powers which should be limited by conditions imposed by those who delegated the power. Thus, he wanted the civil society to restrain the powers of the sovereign. Jean-Jacques Rousseau also held that citizens could rebel against the sovereign if the latter broke the contract

This conflict between the elected government and the civil society goes on and on. The government feels and asserts that it has got the mandate of the people to act in their interest. Most governments do sincerely believe that they are working for the welfare of the people. The Emergency reminds how parliament and the Supreme Court can also trample citizens' freedoms when even the tight life was suspended and the Supreme Court upheld it in the *Habeas Corpus* case.

In the interest of promotion of NGOs, as effective instrument of people's participation, there is an urgent need of some for a at the national and state level should be used for exchange of information, creating infrastructure for training, undertaking research, sharing of resources, expertise, etc., and to consider their common problems arising out of the voluntary action. The NGOs should have a opportunity treat colour with the government in order to redefine their role and demarcate the functions and agencies. This also calls for a thorough review of the grant-in-aid system itself in the context of future policy thrust of the NGOs sector in the field of social development.

Civil society as the good society keeps our 'eyes on the prize' being the goals of poverty-reduction and deep democracy that require coordinated action across different sets of institutions. Local bodies independent of the government, like Lokpal, Lokadalats, CVCs and Vigilance commission should be formed to provide speedy justice with low expenses.

There has been an important move towards governmental transparency brought on by a relatively recent piece of legislation. From 12 October 2005, the Right to Information Act (RTI Act), 2005 became fully operational across India. The Act provides people in India the right to access government-held information and requires systems to be set up for ensuring transparent and accountable government. It has been two years since the RTI act has been enacted, yet its use has been limited to the larger towns and cities. Its use, especially in the rural areas has been very low, mainly due to the fact that there has been hardly any training, orientation programs or large-scale awareness generation campaigns amongst the rural masses. Lack of awareness and training are the main reasons why people find it difficult to access information from various government bodies. This creates a unique and important opportunity for

civil society organizations, especially those working at the grassroots in rural areas, to help citizens take advantage of the landmark legislation. More specifically they have the responsibility to spread awareness about this Act amongst the people and monitor its implementation.

### III. CONCLUSION:

We support the corruption that is why it exists. It is like diabetes, which may not be possible to root out completely at all levels. India is facing many big problems like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, pollution etc. corruption plays an important role in making these problems even bigger. The Lokpal bill has been pending for four decades but could not be enacted. This shows the lack of political will to eradicate corruption from its root from Indian society.. It goes to the credit of civil society that it galvanised the public opinion in its favour. The civil society of India start working from onwards to Eradicate corruption from India then only the whole world will say India is an developed Country.

### REFERENCES

- [1]. Robinson, Mark 'Civil Society and Ideological Contestation in India in Carolyn Elliot eds
- [2]. 'Civil Society and Democracy': A reader' 2003, (INDIA, New Delhi) Pp 372-73.
- [3]. Diamond Larry "Civil Society, developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation." 1999. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press. Pp 218-260.
- [4]. Vishnu Bhagawan. "Public Administration" 2007. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Limited. Pp 482-496
- [5]. Meghand Desai. "Why India is Corrupt. The Indian Express, April 1, 2009.
- [6]. Neera Chandhoke. Whatever has happened to Civil Society? Economic and Political Weekly, Vol 47 No. 23. 2012. Pp 39-45.
- [7]. Ravinder Kaur. "India Inc. and its Moral Discontents". Economic and Political Weekly, Vol 47 No 20, 2012. Pp 40-45.