

CORRUPTION IN INDIA

INTRODUCTION:

In its simplest sense, corruption may be defined as an act of bribery or misuse of public position or power for the fulfillment of selfish motives or to gain personal gratifications. It has also been defined as “Misuse of authority as a result of consideration of personal gain which need not be monetary”. Legally corruption is defined as “use of public power for private advantage in ways which transgresses some formal rule or law”. Corruption in present times has spread over the entire society as a cancerous disease in all forms. The most common forms of corruption are taking of bribes (money offered in cash or kind or gift etc), nepotism (undue favour from holder of patronage to relatives), misappropriation (using the money of other people for one’s own sake), patronage (undue or wrong support by people in position to friends and family members and favoritism).

Corruption is not a malady of modern age. History is replete with instances where Judas have received bribes in the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Babylon and Jewish society. Bribery was very common in Roman Empire as well as in France during the fifteenth century. England was described as a ‘sink-hole’ of corruption in the seventeenth century and Gibbon described it as the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty in the nineteenth century. Even Chanakaya has mentioned cases of embezzlement by government officials. During the British Rule, bribes were accepted not only by the Indian officials but even by the highly placed British officials. Lord Clive and Warren Hastings were tried by a parliamentary committee after their return to England. Thus, corruption is not only an age-old malady but a global problem too.

CORRUPTION IN INDIA – AN ANALYSIS:

Presently, India figures as the seventh most corrupt country in the world according to Transparency International’, a non-government German Organization. Acceptance of gifts and rewards for work done in an official capacity, or obtaining objects or advantages., Illegally, or fraudulent use of public property, acquiring financial resources more than one’s income, abuse of public office, avoiding one’s duty or avoiding payment of taxes are a few kinds of corruption prevalent in our society today. Defence Ministry and Ministry of Communication are regarded as ‘gold mines for making money’. Corruption is also at a high rate in departments like Public Works, Police, Excise and Revenue. Corruption in these departments is rampant at all levels from the highest to the lowest. The registered number of cases of corruption in India under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947 varied from 300 to 500 between 1981 and 1987 but after the enforcement of 1988 Act, the number now varies between 1800 to 2000 annually.

It is well established that politicians are extremely corrupt the world over. In fact, people are surprised to find an honest politician. These corrupt politicians go scot-free, unharmed and unpunished. Leaders like Lal Bahadur Shastri or Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel are a rare breed now

who had very little bank balance at the time of death. The list of scams and scandals in the country is endless. The Bofors payoff scandal of 1986 involved a total amount of Rs 1750 crore in purchase of guns from a Swedish firm for the Army. The Cement scandal of 1982 involved the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the Sugar Scandal of 1994 involved a Union Minister of State for food, the Urea Scam and of course no one can forget Hawala Scandal of 1991, the Coffin-gate, fodder scam in Bihar or the Stamp scandal which shocked not only the political arena but the entire society.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION:

Various laws have been framed from time to time to prevent or at least reduce corruption. The Prevention of Corruption Act came into force in September 1988. It was an improvisation of the Act of 1947. The scope of the 1988 Act was enlarged and widened to include the term 'public servants'. Thus if an offence against a public servant is proved in the court there will be imprisonment of not less than 6 months upto 5 years and also the person may be fined. The Central Government has set up four departments to check corruption—Administrative Vigilance Division in the Department of Personnel and Training, Central Bureau of Investigation, Domestic Vigilance units in Ministries / Departments / Public Undertaking or Nationalized Banks and Central Vigilance Commission.

CONCLUSION:

Laws and rules have to be implemented with strictness and if needed, the outdated ones should be amended in order to check the acts of corruption. Vigilance should be increased so that people think twice before indulging in corrupt practices. Election expenses should be strictly curtailed and finally, without the co-operation of the common man, the evil of corruption cannot be eradicated.