

**CORRUPTION AND CONSUMERISM :
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
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CERTIFICATE

The dissertation entitled ‘**Corruption and Consumerism : A Sociological Analysis**’ submitted by **Ms. Sangeeta Kumari** is partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.)** of this University , is an original work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or any other University to the best of my knowledge.


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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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To
My Parents

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SANGEETA KUMARI

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I would like to agree that economics, as it has emerged, can be made more productive by paying greater and more explicit attention to the ethical considerations that shape human behaviour and judgement. Further, it can be added that a person is illfed , undernourished , unsheltered and ill can still be high up in the scale of happiness or desire fulfillment if he or she has learned to have realistic desire and to take pleasure on small mercies.

- Amartya Sen, 1987

INTRODUCTION

Some Issues Relating to Corruption

Corruption has become an issue of major political and economic significance in recent years. This has led to a resurgence of interests analysing the phenomenon and the diverse forms that it assumes in developing countries with an expectation and democratisation and economic liberalisation offer potential routes to dealing with the problem. Anti-corruption strategies range from institutional reforms through to concerted efforts at the international level, but the efficacy of these approaches had not been subject to careful empirical research¹.

- Mark Robinson

An action contrary to the established social norms or usage may be deemed as corrupt and as such it is difficult to determine the exact forms of corruption unless we try to do away with our emotional attachment to a particular norm or practice. More over the ideas about corruption within the same society also sometimes vary.

According to group differences and self- interest, customs, traditions

¹ Robinson, Mark; fellow of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the university of Sussex. Most of the contributions were first presented at a workshop on 'Corruption and Development' organised by IDS in May 1997; Series of articles were available in 'European Journal of Development Research'; 10((1)), June 1998; Pg.- 1-227.

and laws framed by the society for its smooth work also often play a vital role in determining the ideas about corruption

As man is not divine, it would be foolish to expect perfect behaviour or morality from him. All talk of incorruptibility in public or private life therefore seems as redundant as philosopher's gossip. Corruption was, and is, and shall remain no matter whether we like it or not. Any thinking on spiritual plane is not going to solve this problem which is directly linked with man's conscience. Corruption like crime is related to real life and is the product of the interplay of different human emotions. These emotions seek an outlet and manifest themselves in human behaviour. Human behaviour is so complex and takes such diverse forms that it is not possible to predict it or formulate a series of exact propositions about it. It is so intricate with so many imponderables that it would be hazardous to predicate with any certainty the course it would adopt. About two thousand and six hundred years ago the great Chinese thinker Confucius had advised his followers "not to do a thing to others, which you will not allow others to do to you."²

In recent years corruption has become an issue of major

² Mansukhani, H.L.; *Corruption and Public Servants* ; Vikas Publishing House, Delhi;1979; pg- 2.

economic and political significance in many countries across the globe, including a number of developed western states

While corruption is a feature of all societies to varying degree, it is a particular concern for developing countries because it undermines economic growth, discourages foreign investment and reduces the resources available for infrastructure, public services and anti - poverty programmes. As noted by Johnston (1997)³, it may also undermine political institutions by weakening the legitimacy and accountability of governments. Corruption also reduces the effectiveness of aid – funded development projects and weakens public support for development assistance in donor countries. Corruption not only affects poor people most directly, through the misallocation of public resources and routine exaction on the part of corrupt local officials, but it also keeps poor countries away from becoming rich.

For these reasons aid donors have focused increasingly on corruption and its impact on development and recognise the need to devise programmes to assist governments in tackling the problem. (World Bank – 1997)⁴

³ Johnston, M.; 'What can be done about entrenched corruption ?' Paper presented to the Ninth Annual Bank conference on Development Economics, The World Bank, Washington DC; 1997; 30th April – 1st May.

⁴ op.cit.; Ref. 1 ; pg-2

A study of the primitive society would suggest that corruption was scarce in those days, perhaps due to the dominance of tradition in undermining conduct and the immediacy of control, which is possible in the small unit. But when the political unit is large, prerequisite for certain type of jobbery give birth to corruption and sometimes it is simply too difficult to tackle.

In ancient India, unlike the present day, the society and the government were free from corruption, though instances of corruption in administration, judiciary and trade abound in the records of the period. These definitely point to all round corruption in public life even in those days when individual culture had an ideal before them, which was practiced by the people and government alike. ⁵

Corruption was rampant in public life in India on a large scale. For the first hand information on bribery and corruption in public life in early times, we naturally turn to the Smriti text, Kautilya's Arthshastra and later Sanskrit texts and historical works which frequently refer to this practice.⁶

⁵ Thakur , Upendra; *Corruption in Ancient India*; Abhinav Pub., New Delhi; 1979; pg-9.

⁶ *ibid*; pg-12.

The subjects of corruption have also been an integral part of India's economic, political and social life since achieving independence from Britain in 1947, and probably even before. Political and bureaucratic corruption at different levels of the government has been seen as plaguing implementation of development programmes and policies (Kohli: 1975)⁷. Various state governments and the central government have from time to time declared their intentions to control the phenomenon (as defined legally and administratively) and have created special agencies such as anti-corruption bureau (ACB) and the Lok Ayukt, seemingly to little avail as the obsession with corruption and measures to counter it continues (Jain 1983: Padhy 1986)⁸. The "problem" has been the concern of various commission of inquiry and government committee, including the often-quoted committee on the prevention of corruption (Known as Santhanam Committee) and the earlier Railway corruption enquiry committee of 1955⁹.

Thus history of corruption dates back from ancient India. Then came foreign rule, and evidences show ample amount of corruption in

⁷ Kohli, Suresh; *Corruption in India*; Chetna Pub., New Delhi; 1975.

⁸ Padhy, K.S. ; *Corruption in Politics: A Case Study* ; B-R Publishing Corporation 1986.

Jain, R.B. ; 'Fighting Political Corruption: The Indian Experience' ; The Indian Political Science Review XVII Page 127-132.

⁹ Pavarala, Vinod; *Interpreting Corruption: Elite Perspective in India*; Sage Pub., New Delhi; 1996; pg - 21

British's rule. Even the public administration which the British took over from their predecessors were notoriously corrupt, inefficient and cussed¹⁰.

The issue of corruption has assumed particular salience in developing countries in recent years because of the spread of democratisation and economic liberalisation. In theory the creation of democratic political institutions offers the potential for closer scrutiny of the actions of politicians and government officials by citizens, an independent media, NGOs and elected representatives. Yet opinion is divided. Some analysts argue that corruption is on the increase as a direct result of democratisation, since democratic political system provide incentives and opportunities for corrupt practices. Others stress the potential of established democracies to devise institutions through which corruption can be tackled. While it remains true that certain kinds of authoritarian regimes (for example in China and some Latin American countries) were able to check the incidence of corruption through political repression and by deploying harsh sanctions (Usually for a

¹⁰ Sethi, M.P.; *Crime and Corruption in the Digital Age*; Authors Press , Delhi; 2000; pg - 1.

limited period of time)¹¹. Others, reality is that, many democratic states in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America are characterised by high and increasing level of corruption, and democratic structures have proved markedly ineffective in curbing the spread and tenacity of corrupt practices in developing countries.¹²

Although the magnitude of corruption does not matter because corruption is corruption. But the cause behind corruption is definitely a matter of great concern. Corruption is a form of deviance because it is not socially approved. Society plays a major role in determining deviant behaviour and controlling it. Society shapes individual behaviour according to the need for smooth functioning of the society. This function of society is called 'social control'. By social control is meant the way in which the entire social orders cohere and maintains itself. Social control is the way in which society patterns and regulates individual behaviour, which in turn serves to maintain the social organisation. The concept of social control focuses on the social order and the individual,

¹¹ Little , W.; 'Corruption and Democracy in Latin America'; Institute of Development Studies Bulletin; Vol. 27; No. 2; pg - 64 - 70.

¹² Harriss, W.B. and White, G.; 'Corruption, Liberalisation and Democracy' Institute of Development Studies Bulletin; Vol. 27; No. 2; pg - 1-5.

the relation of the unit and the whole¹³. Social values; social sanctions, norms and mores can be said as the instruments of the social control.

Society control human behaviour. It curbs those personality traits, which are not desirable, and it inculcates those traits, which are not desirable for the social relationship. So, it can be said that society curbs certain negative traits (like greed, anger etc.) which can lead to deviant behaviour, in the very childhood of an individual. Thus individual learns to act according to the social norms and values. For e.g. – in Indian society much emphasis is been given to spiritual living. Simple living and high thinking is the value of Indian society. SO Indians are learnt to live their life for spiritual satisfaction. They pay more importance to the purification of their life style. Social values decide the code of conduct of the whole society.

As ‘father of sociology’ , great sociologist Emil Durkhiem¹⁴ in his theory of ‘Crime and Punishment’ says when there is deviance in behaviour, it can have positive functions for the society. And Robert K. Merton¹⁵ in his theory of ‘Social Structure and anomie’ gives different selection of means

¹³ MacIver, R.M. and Page, Charles H.; *Society: An Introductory Analysis*; Macmillan India Ltd., Delhi; 2000; Chapter 7 ; pg – 137 for further detail

¹⁴ Durkhiem, Emile; *The Rules of sociological Methods*; The Free Press, New York, 1938

¹⁵ Merton, Robert K.; *Social Theory and Social Structure*; Enlarged Edition; The Free Press, New York, 1968.

to meet the goal as a cause of deviant behaviour. Deviant behaviour is strictly controlled by punishment and thus it enforces social law on the individual. In the recent times when corruption is increasing at an alarming rate it means that enforcement of social laws through punishment is no more effective. It is also possible that due to the change in social values corruption is no more considered as sin as it used to be earlier. Now corruption has become a part of everybody life. Change in social values is dealt in detail in Chapter Two (2). Society has a role to play in determining individual values and way of living. Through strong imposition of social values certain social problem can be easily vanished especially corruption. Corruption is there because people have accepted it.

An article written in Third concept (June 1999) says – corruption is now an integral component of social conduct. But don't the word social conduct imply culture? After all the social conduct of an individual is a manifestation of his culture. The way the person conducts himself or herself is determined by the cultural values that society has ingrained in him or her. It is because of this very fact, the fact that corruption is an internal part of contemporary culture.¹⁶

It would be preposterous to argue that a thing exists even though the society does not want it to exist. Maladies like corruption and bribery

¹⁶ Saud, Ebadur Rahman and Waheedi, Asadul Haque; 'The culture of Corruption : An insight from Sociological perspective'; Third Concept; June 1999; pg-27.

infest the society because men in administration as well as the members of the society want it ¹⁷.

Corruption which affects institutions and influences individual behaviour at all levels of a political and socio- economic system. Johnston calls it 'systemic' and 'entrenched' corruption. This form of corruption has a number of characteristic features: it is imbedded in specific socio-cultural environments, and tends to be monopolistic, organised and difficult to avoid. Entrenched corruption features in societies with the following characteristics: low political competition, low and uneven economic growth, a weak civil society and the absence of institutional mechanisms to deal with corruption. In contrast, those societies, which are relatively free of corruption, are premised on respect for civil liberties, accountable government, and a wide range of economic opportunities and structured political competition¹⁸.

Corruption in a developing society and in newly independent states is so rampant and has pervaded all professional walks of life that its visible effects are too serious to be ignored¹⁹.

¹⁷ op.cit.; Ref 5; pg 3-4

¹⁸ op.cit.; Ref 3.

¹⁹ Kohli, M.; 'Social Dynamics of Corruption In India' ; in Bhatnagar, S. and Sharma, S.L.(Ed.); Ess - Ess Pub., New Delhi; 1991.pg-11.

In fact, any social change related with development is accompanied by corruption. Because change always starts from a section and another section which is deprived of these changes try to acquire it and thus take shelter in the lap of corruption. These illegal means to acquire something of what the section is deprived gives way to different modes of corruption. Since India is the country of multi-dimensional diversities there is always inequality prevailing throughout the society. These inequalities on the longer run give way to corruption. Privileged group tries to keep their group members in that particular privileged group that is why he takes the help of corruption and the unprivileged section to mobilise, into the privileged section takes the help of corruption. So, it is quite clear that inequality breeds corruption.

‘The incentive to corrupt whatever official purposes public institutions are agreed to have is specially great in conditions of extreme inequality and considerable absolute poverty. Generally corruption seems likely to be inseparable from great inequality’.

- Colin Leys²⁰

Leys analysis is similar to Merton’s ‘Structural Strain Theory of Deviance’²¹, which suggests that individuals or groups placed low in the stratification system feel that they are denied access to their goal

²⁰ Leys, colin; ‘what is problem about corruption ’ in Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston and Victor T. Le Vine (ED) ; *Political Corruption :A Hand Book* Transaction Books; pg 51-66.

²¹ op.cid.; Ref 15.

through legitimate means and the resulting 'strain' forces them to resort to deviant means²².

In the recent years of industrialisation, globalisation, consumerism has structured society with deep inequality, poverty, illiteracy as well as highly prestigious, high income, modern consumerist urban-based elite. These developments are uneven and generally section oriented. It changes psychology with political, economic and social change.

No man is born corrupt, but then he is not immune from the various influences either, which different institutions exert upon his mind and accordingly shape his future growth. In other words an honest administration generally produces honest citizens whereas a corrupt administration generates in them the similar trend of taking to corrupt practices to achieve their objectives, giving way to all round delegation in the society²³.

In the recent years of globalisation, Indians have come in to the contact of different cultures and in some or the other way this influence has changed the way of living and thinking of Indian consumers. And this change is so automatic that its influence on behaviour is usually taken for granted. It is only when we are exposed to people with different cultural values or customs that we become aware of how culture has molded our own behaviour.

²² op.cit. ; Ref 9, pg - 110.

²³ ibid; pg-3.

Change in behaviour of Indian consumers can be remarkably studied after the phase of liberalisation. It has changed the behaviour through market force. Markets flooded with new products works towards generating demand for the product. This becomes easier through the help of various means of advertisement. Advertisement catches the customers according to the product. For e.g. -If product is meant for higher class, through advertisement this message is sent that this product is for higher class, or, the people who are consuming it are of higher class. It tries to capture the mind of higher-class consumers and tries to develop need for that particular product. This strategy works for all kinds of product.

Because status symbol is always attached with the products, demand of product changes into need and gradually it becomes the necessity for class for its survival. Similarly, products need percolates into the lower stratas, as there is always a competition for the upward mobility among different classes. Necessity of higher class becomes the need for the lower one and gradually it becomes necessity. This is the way in which product captures the market.

Social class (or relative status in the community) is particularly amenable to use as a market segmentation variable. It usually is 'measured' by a weighted index of several variables such as education, occupation, and income. The concept of social class implies a hierarchy in which individuals in the same class generally have the same degree of

status, while member of other classes have either higher or lower status. Studies have shown that consumers in different social classes vary in terms of values, product preferences, and buying habits.²⁴

Consumers targeted manufactured products generate multiple needs and multiple necessities because of the multiple availability of products in the nearest market. These multiple need generation is possible only through generating greed. Greed has no limitations. It compels human beings to acquire more and more. This is a very general tendency, and in terms of purchasing products this can be identified as 'consumerism'.

In my understanding although corruption is a historical reality, but after liberalisation it has spread its wings more firmly over all sections of the society without any discrimination. Highly sophisticated and fancy products have tightly gripped the Indian consumer's mind. At the same time, it is also true that more reliability, quality and comfort is been provided by these products which was not possible earlier in the limited available choice.

Market has changed Indian mind setting. There is a movement from caste as well as class-consciousness. This consciousness of a particular class compels consumer to follow reference

²⁴ Schiffman, G. Leon and Kanuk, Leslie Lazer; *Consumer Behaviour* ; (5th Edition) Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd.; 1994; pg -64.

group.²⁵Purchasing decision of a consumer is mostly decided by the product and its conspicuous nature to signify particular status. The potential influence of a reference group on a purchase decision varies according to how visually or verbally conspicuous the product is to others. A visually conspicuous product is one that will stand out and be noticed (e.g. A luxury item or novelty product), a verbally conspicuous product may be highly interesting or it may be easily described to others. Products that are especially conspicuous and status – revealing (a new automobile, fashion clothing, and home furniture) are most likely to be purchased with an eye to the reactions of relevant others. Products that are less conspicuous (canned fruits, laundry soaps) are less likely to be purchased with a reference group in mind.²⁶

Liberalisation has flooded the market with more conspicuous products in comparison to less conspicuous one. Thus develops greed and competition among buyers. When these desires are not fulfilled

legally, people try to acquire it through illegal means and go for corruption (this tendency is dealt in detail in Chapter 3). This tendency has grown in all the sections of the society. This is the reason, why in

²⁵ A group that provides an individual with his or her basic beliefs and standards of conduct and serves as a model for evaluation of self as well as others. The term was introduced by MuZafer Sherif in his text book 'An Outline of Social Psychology' 1948. Subsequently, this concept was elaborated and modified by sociologists like turner, Hayman and Merton.

²⁶ op.cit.; Ref 24; pg 332-3.

this phase no body thinks of leading a fare, pure and spiritual life. It has led to cultural change. Cultural beliefs, values and customs continue to be followed as long as they yield satisfaction. When a specific standard no longer satisfies the members of a society, however, it is modified or replaced, so that the resulting standard is more in line with current needs and desires. Thus culture gradually but continually evolves to meet the needs of society.²⁷ That is why, even if a person ignores his desires for a certain time period after a while he tries to acquire it.

While studying the inter linkage of corruption and consumerism certain points should be clarified before going into the details of this topic.

This is a topic of my interest. I feel there should be a focused study on why there is corruption? There are ample literatures available on corruption dealing with how and how much a particular society is corrupt. How certain officials are engaged in corrupt practices and how million dollars scam took place under everybody's nose. Types of corruption, magnitude and variety of it is a matter of further description. But when a question is asked – why there is corruption and how it can be controlled, several reasons and theories are given. Some theories say liberalisation of economy is the ultimate cure of it²⁸. Some says if there is bureaucracy there will be corruption. Bureaucracy and corruption both

²⁷ *ibid.*; pg-410.

²⁸ *op.cit.*; Ref 12; pg 1-5.

are part and parcels of each other²⁹. What ever can be the theories regarding its origin and about its cure, but one should not forget that corruption in itself is a historical reality. It was there when economy was closed and it there when economy is open. It was also present in the kingship period and persisted throughout the foreign rule. It is argued that it is a game of power, so who so ever be given power try to franchise it for their own benefit. Then what is the reason that certain leaders and power holding top bureaucrats are quoted for their honesty?

Corruption is a personal attitude. It is an attitude towards work and towards the whole society. It shows individual sensitivity for others and their determination to do something good for others if they have power to do it. Corruption is a matter of personal greed. It forces to acquire illegal means for personal interest. Greed has very long tentacles and it can be stimulated very easily. Market is the main force behind its stimulation. Sometimes different agencies like family, peer group, neighbourhood etc forces individuals to fall into that trap. It motivates individuals to be greedy. So consumerism is the result of greed or heightened greed is the result of consumerism. Corruption can be controlled if greed can be controlled. Greed can be controlled through high moral and social values. This value enforcement should be so strong that crossing these limits of values should be considered as sin. On the other hand, legal system should be so strong that corruption should be

²⁹ Dube, S.C.; *Unfinished Task*; (Ed.); 1977; Vikas Pub. House, New Delhi.

punished and punishment should be considered as a landmark in this field. Secondly, the most important thing in my opinion, is economic policy should be made in isolation from social and cultural aspect.

Further this should be taken into consideration that corruption does not occur always because of consumerism. It is not that all corrupt people are consumerist or all consumerists are corrupt. There is no one to one relation between two. Consumerism is an attitude and it not always depend on extra income, but it is there that if there is an extra income it may lead to consumerism. It is that if there is consumerism, it may lead to corruption or if there is corruption it may lead to consumerism.

Corruption and consumerism both are personal mindset. In this set of two, corruption is always harmful for the society where as consumerism can be good or bad for it. But it can be a cause of 'problem'. So there is a need to control both. It is possible only when there is a change in positive personal values and high social ideology.

According to Tamil Veda, the corruption influence are eternal i.e. corruption will always exist. It is not possible to eliminate corruption once and for all. It is the capacity of a society to contain corruption that is relevant. A society, which does not posses the tenacity to continuously fight against corruption, will be wholly corrupted and will one day or the other vanish from the face of the earth. A society which is eternally

vigilant, which is capable of cohesiveness and firmness in its principles and which has the capacity to fight for containing the evil of corruption will not only survive for long but will also grow from strength to strength and prosper. But, to develop this capacity, the society requires divine grace.³⁰

³⁰ Muthukumaran, S.; 'Corruption : Its Dimensions' ; in Narayanswamy, N., Boraian, M.P., Jeyaraju, M.F.; *Corruption at the grassroots: The shades and shadows*; (Ed.); Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi; 2000; pg-55.



CHAPTER : ONE

Situating Corruption as a Social Phenomenon

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Corruption is a global phenomenon. It is found almost in every society in one or the other since time immemorial. In ancient times, the judges received bribes in Egyptian, Babylonian and Hebrew societies. In Rome, bribe was a common feature in elections to public offices. In France, judicial officers were sold during the fifteenth century. England was described as a 'sink hole' of corruption in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century also, corruption was so rampant in Britain that Gibbon described it as the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty¹.

In India, Kautilya has referred in his Arthasashtra to embezzlement by government servants out of the state revenue. He has mentioned about forty types of embezzlement and corrupt practices². During Asoka's regime, corruption prevailed on a lower scale. In medieval society, scope for corruption was minimum, because only few authorities existed for the collection of taxes. So long they amassed wealth they were praised rather than censured. During the British rule, bribes were accepted not only by the Indian officials but by the highly placed British officials too. The expansion of economic activities during the first and

¹ Seminar, No. 421, Sept. 1994.

² Thakur, Upendra; *Corruption in Ancient India*; Abhinav Pub., New Delhi; 1979; pg-21.

second world wars opened new vistas of corruption in the country. War – time controls restrictions and scarcities provided ample opportunities for bribery, corruption, and favouritism. After independence, though top political elite at the national level remained very honest for about one and a half decades but after the third and the fourth general elections, the new political elite lost people’s confidence of being honest³.

The problem of corruption seems to be a taken for granted reality in many parts of the world. In most developing countries, it is apparently seen as another problem to content with as those nations grapple with the complex processes of social and economic development. However, this apparent taken for grantedness hides a minefield of contentions and contestations that beset the issue of corruption in most societies.

It is not easy to propose a compact and comprehensive formal definition of corruption. The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers as many as nine meanings of corruption, which can be grouped into four main categories. Corruption may apply to an object (physical decomposition, putrefaction, spoiling of quality, adulteration); to the perversion of language or taste, to morals (to destroy moral purity, to debase, to defy); or to public office (to destroy or prevent the integrity or fidelity of a

³ Halayya, M.; *Corruption in India*; 1985; Affiliated East West Press, Madras; pg 5-8.

person in his discharge of duty, to induce to act dishonestly or unfaithfully, to make venal, to bribe). The last two aspects are captured in the etymology of the word, based on the Latin word to break, *rumpere*, which implies that something is broken, such as a moral or social code of conduct or, more narrowly, a law or an administrative rule.

Corruption can straddle both the public and private sectors. However, given our focus on corruption in the public services, it might be useful to start with the narrow definition that corruption is the 'misuse of public power for private gain'⁴. Other definitions have been offered citing the misuse of public office, violation of public interest, disapproval of public opinion and the illegal use of public office for private gain. These and similar definitions have been critiqued on the ground that they tend to be too broad and intermittent, since there could be much debate on what constitutes 'misuse' or 'public power' or 'public interest'. On the other hand, definitions which link corruption narrowly to bribery have been faulted on the ground that they leave out forms of misconduct which can lead to or result from corruption, such as nepotism, patronage, and a variety of white collar offences which may or may not involve direct or immediate financial considerations⁵.

⁴ Senturia , J.J.; 'Corruption Political' Encyclopedia of the Social Science; Vol 4; 1931.

⁵ Guhan, S. and Paul, Samuel; *Corruption in India : Agenda for action*; Vision Books Pub., New Delhi;1997; pg 1-2.

We have three types of phenomenon in the term corruption - bribery, extortion and nepotism. They are not completely identical, but can be classified under one heading. Essentially there is a common thread running through these three types of phenomenon. The subordination of public interests to private aims providing a violation of the norms of duty and welfare, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and a callous disregard for any consequence suffered by the public.

The characteristics of corruption are as follows: -

1. Corruption always involves more than one person.
2. Corruption on the whole involves secrecy.
3. It involves an element of mutual obligation and benefit.
4. Those who practice usually attempt to camouflage their activities by restoring to some form of lawful justification.
5. Involved people are those who want definite decisions and those who are able to influence those decisions.
6. It involves deception usually of public body or society at large.
7. It is betrayal of trust.
8. It involves contradiction, dual function of those who are committing the act.⁶

⁶ Padhy, K.S. and Muni, P.K.; *Corruption in Indian Politics : A case study of an Indian state*; 1987; pg 1

Looking at it, it might be useful to look for an operational rather than an abstract definition. In India the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, which applies to public servants, deals with corruption basically in terms of 'taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act'. The word 'gratification' is not restricted to pecuniary gratifications or gratifications estimable in money. The offence consists of accepting, or agreeing to accept, or obtaining, or attempting to obtain, any such illegal gratification 'as a motive or reward for doing or forbearing to do any official act or showing or forbearing to show in the exercise of his official functions, favour or disfavour to any person or for rendering or attempting to render any service or disservice to any person'. Other offences under the act include related misconduct, such as taking gratification in order to influence a public servant in the exercise of his official duties, acceptance of gifts by public servants, and position of wealth disproportionate to own sources of income. Thus the various provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 add up to a reasonable working definition of corruption⁷.

Corruption has penetrated into our polity, bureaucracy, business and finally into our cultural fabric. It is a ubiquitous phenomenon, with its tentacles spread across the breadth and length of the developing and developed world. Corruption has deep struck roots in every soil from

⁷ *ibid*; Page 2-3

macro to micro level. Eradication of corruption is, therefore , a Herculean task haunting the minds of planners and policy makers in every country.

The extensive literature on the subject of corruption draws attention to political systems and practices, economic development, economic policies, sociological characteristics and the cultural milieu as the main factors, which are relevant for a causal explanation of corruption. In terms of sociological factors, it has been argued that caste, kinship and patron- client relationship, especially in predominantly rural societies, generate and reproduce corruption through networks of nepotism, patronage and dependency. Cultural factors that have been relied upon to explain corruption include the custom of 'gift – giving' in traditional societies with the expectation of reciprocal rewards.

Corruption, for instances, has been recorded at very high levels not just in democracies but also in authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Advanced economies both socialist and market oriented are also prone to corruption (e.g.- USA, the former USSR, Japan and countries in western and eastern Europe)⁸.

⁸ Andreski; 'The Africa Predicament' ; Atherton Press; 1968.

_____ ; 'Parasitism and Subversion : The case of Latin America', London;1966.

Cairno; Bureaucratic Corruption in Asia : Causes , consequences and controls; JMC Press; 1986.

Ekpo, Monday U.; Bureaucratic Corruption in Sub Saharan Africa : Towards a search for causes and consequences; University Press Of America, Washington DC; 1979.

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Tanzi, Vito; The Underground Economy in United States and Abroad; (Ed.); Lexington DC ; 1982.

Theobald , Robin; Corruption Development and Underdevelopment; Duke University Press; 1990

Even sociological and cultural factors can not be relied upon to systematically account for differential levels or trends in corruption. Accordingly, the conclusion that emerges on the basis of available empirical evidence is that it would be untenable to characterise democracies, developing countries or traditional societies as immutably condemned to a state of corruption.⁹

What is Consumerism: -

Consumerism is a restless and agitated competitive struggle for more. It the guise of usurpers of the necessities of the poorest, and caste them in the role of heroic creators of wealth. Who are performing universal philanthropy in their very acquisitiveness and greed?

The term consumerism was not applied to designate the tendencies in conspicuous assumption which have incidentally began evincing similarities to that of the developed economies. Consumerism was viewed initially, as a movement to protect the interest of consumers in the modern world who have been becoming aware of their rights as consumers. The movement was against the exploitative practices then in vogue in the industry. The US in the sixties witnessed the mobilised efforts towards this direction. Gradually consumption ceased to be the

⁹ op.cit. ; Ref 5; pg – 12.

apt term to imply the pattern in human consumption as an array of new items entered the list everyday¹⁰.

Consumerism, albeit a new phenomenon and concept was prevalent in societies from time immemorial but in various forms. Various terms have been applied to designate the sort of consumption akin to the present form of consumerism. Eminent thinkers like Rousseau and Adam Smith explained the types of consumption aimed at gratifying the aspiration of people other than utility. This characteristic was obvious in the consumption of luxury items. Simple gratification of bodily needs as Adam Smith believed, had given way to the gratification of the social and cultural ones, i.e. from physical to social survival. Luxury consumption inspired individuals to find a way to establish and consolidate their personal status and prestige within the community. But it was later named conspicuous consumption.

Thorstein Veblen in 1899¹¹, for the first time, used the term conspicuous consumption to denote the consumption involving luxury goods and services. Any consumption primarily concerned with the ostentatious display of wealth is conspicuous consumption. The wish to

¹⁰ Munshi, M.C.; *Consumerism* ; 1989. Leslie Swamy Programme Of Training For Democracy ; New Delhi; pg – 5.

¹¹ Veblen, Thorstein; *The theory of the Leisure Class* ; New York ;1899; Reprint 1912.

impress others with one's ability to pay high prices is the reason behind this species of consumption. It is effected by social rather than economic or psychological utility of products. Conspicuous consumption is clear manifestation of the desire to display one's economic ability and hence the direct utility of commodities is of no prime interest.¹²

Consumer involvement with a product is actually a mental state variable, which is generally viewed as perceived personal relevance of the object to person's needs, values and goals. And, therefore, it is distinct from its causes and effects and has both intensity and direction. The product is perceived personally relevant to the extent that consumer perceives it to be self – related or in some way instrumental in achieving their personal goals and values. In other words, it represents the perceived linkage between the consumer's self-knowledge (i.e. the knowledge about self, interest, needs, values and goals) and the product knowledge about attributes and benefits.¹³

The conventional meaning of consumption lost all its nuances with the advent of new merchandise in the market. Things, once considered exclusively for the consumption of some sections of the populations,

¹² Sooryamoorthy, R.; *Consumption to Consumerism : In the context of Kerela*; Classical Pub. Company, New Delhi; 1998; pg – 14.

¹³ Sharma, Kavita; *Impact of Consumer Involvement on Consumer Behaviour : A case study of India*; Chapter 1; pg – 25

started arriving at market with the appeal to woo consumers of different categories. Advancing technologies found new expressions in these products, creating needs and transforming them into essentials for the living. Producers attributed some features other than functional and utility, to the marketed goods sociological as to boost sales. They succeeded in stirring up the status-consciousness of consumers. The status – content attributed to products motivated them to purchase in order to enhance their existing social standing and prestige. More and more it became inevitable to fulfil these latent functions, consumerism had begun to show its face.

Consumerism and Corruption: -

Consumerism and corruption are interrelated. Greed associated with consumerism gives birth to many ills – crime and corruption. The cancerous spread of corruption in public life, which has been a matter of great concern to people in all walks of life, is a serious problem. No one has sociological far discovered the scales to measure the dimensions of ‘the problem’. The standard barometer, the report from the head of the institutions indicates the location of the area of ‘the problem’ – it is omnipresent – corruption is all prevalent and has global ramifications¹⁴.

¹⁴ Chitkara, M.G.; *Consumerism, Crime and Corruption* ; A.P.H.Publishing Corporation, New Delhi; 1996; Prelude, pg. –1.

Multiplicity and expandability of human wants and worldly wishes are natural and if allowed to have their unrestrained play beyond the pale of need, are the root cause of the current consumerist culture. It leads to crime including corruption, in order to meet the multiple expensive wants amounting to insatiable greed. Consumerism is the nasty negative theory of western economics, that a steady growth in the consumption of goods is necessary for a sound economy. A corollary of this pernicious principle is that increase in the wants for goods and services will increase the standard of living. That is higher the wants, the higher the efforts, to be put in and higher will be the resultant production raising the standard of living higher. More the merrier, is the motto of consumerism.

“Greed is good, greed is right, greed works. It terrifies and has captured the essence of the revolutionary spirit. Greed, in all its forms has marked the upward surge of mankind. It will save the malfunctioning corporation called the USA”. The words of Ivan Bosky, a Wall Street financial, soon backfire. Greed has been the grim reaper of many souls. Desires make the world go round, and money is desire’s way of organising itself. Greed is subtle, it is slow poison, it is killing us slowly and tearing us apart. The vast bulk of our population is uneducated and is poor. With the alarming growth of population, the constraints are on natural and public utility services, causing

environmental degradation¹⁵. The upward souring of poverty the inordinately heavy concentration of wealth and privilege among a very small proportion of the population leads to environmental degradation and corruption.

In India's tradition character has always occupied the place of foremost importance. Character has two facets: the one, which is personal, and the other, which manifests itself in our relationship with society. Indian culture has always held high the purity of personal character. Indians have never called a personal philosopher who is selfish or given to various vices like wine, women, and gold. The philosopher to us Indian is more than all a man of absolute purity, integrity, and austerity of character. The emphasis of Indian culture is on means. This means individual for achieving the 'ideal'. The social welfare must also be same that the end justifies the means. However, bad means can never yield good results in the long run. If for some times bad mean appears to give good results, it is only temporary. It is like trying to warm ourselves by setting amidst fire when caught in a hailstorm. The warmth will soon result in our total reduction to ashes.

Bad means are those in which there is a great desire to get material incentives and to get one's work done ignoring the legal and social checks originally meant to safeguard the common and long term

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pg – 125.

interests of the society and violating the interest and priorities of other. Corruption and greed is the main cause behind its origination.

Social life is influenced by the economic or political system of society products vice versa. While looking on to the historical evolution of new political system called democracy and new economic era of liberalisation and industrialisation which has changed the social values and moral of general public. These changes are somehow responsible for generating a fertile ground for greed and corruption.

The end of Second World War saw the devotion of self – role on most of those countries, which had been under foreign domination for a long period. Most of these had least patriotism and nationalism from their rules. Rigid boundaries of the nation – state had come about only recently in many parts of the world and the societies based on tribal affinities and not yet accepted them as ground realities. These people, therefore, did not realise the huge responsibility of self – government that fell on them after independence. Need for self-discipline, self – examination and self – correction is essential in a democratic society, but people were not mature for democracy either by training or a firm faith in the efficacy. Democracy was either want of a better alternative or as a fashion of the day. Democracy grows out of individual and his faith in his own judgement. In the new democracies, most people lacked in these qualities and vote were cast in-groups based on communal, religion, caste, sectarian and other considerations, thus generating corruption.

The leadership lacked national outlook and far sightedness and look for immediate gains for themselves and their communities or constituencies to get credit of quick results.

Political parties required huge funds to be able to propagate their programmes and fight elections. Thus democracy is a costly form of government. This money could not come from the poor or who earned marginally comfortable livelihood with their sweat and blood. It comes from who had a lot of unaccounted spare money made by illegal means these people needed political protection and patronage to be able to legitimise this money very badly to further increase it. Though political parties needed this money, they did not realise that this would compromise their ideology and in the long run criminalised the whole politics and corrupt the society.

Globalisation, the report warns, has made the Third World vulnerable to attacks by finance capital while investment capital is hard to come by. Globalisation has opened the doors for free trade, communication and mutual exchange of culture etc. This has developed a new ground for corruption. This form of corruption is not confined to any land but it is all over the world. It takes place on the international ground with international players of it. International corruption takes the form of bribes and illegal payments in the context of trade, aid and investment flows between countries. It can entail preferential access to trading opportunities, favouritism in the process of investment proposals,

and kickbacks derived from the abuse of international procurement procedures, with significant economic repercussions. For example – a recent cross – national economic study shows that corruption has a major taxation effect, which discourages foreign investment.¹⁶

It is hard to draw the whole scenario of the whole Indian states because of ability of limited literature on Indian tribal groups and their changing life style for consumerism. We have enough indication of changing rural India's face for consumerist culture as sociologist M.N.Srinivas has very rightly quoted it in his article in 'Economic and Political Weekly' "changing values in India today"(May 8,1993).

Though it is not sufficient but it can be said that aspirational, impressionistically, we can state that relative to the peasantry, the level of aspirations among tribal communities is comparatively lower. Even within the bounds of indigenous civilization, the peasants world view is affected by ideals coming from the elite of the city, creating in him the desire for more land and wealth, more political power, superior social status for his family, lineage, or caste group, artistic and intellectual excellence which is recognized by an expanded audience and so on.¹⁷

Multinational companies would not be able to solve the problem of sovergenity, security, governance, poverty eradication, and other related

¹⁶ Khan, M.H.; 'A typology of corrupt transactions in developing countries'; IDS Bulletin; Vol. 27 ; No. 2; pg. 12-21.

¹⁷ Desai, A.R.; *Rural Sociology In India*; 1978; pg. 249.

problems. The foreign operators of whichever country look upon India as a market for earning profits and will go to any extent to earn them. In fact some foreign operators may act to the detriment of the interest of their country and operate to serve the interests of their countries. This country, by opening its doors to them, will invite interferences with its social, political and cultural policies.

The Indian society has been changing from being an agricultural and 'feudal' society to one that is industrial and capitalistic. The change is also from being a colonial, poor and traditional society to one that is democratic, prosperous and modern. While the change is beneficial in some ways, in other ways it involves going from one sick phase into another. Capitalist society, as in the USA or state capitalist society as in the USSR is marked by the prosperity and some kind of mobility. At the same time such societies are sick as indicated by wars, the cold war, the arms race, high incidence of mental illness, drug addiction, suicide and crime. Corruption, in the form of patronage, sharp business practices, tax evasion and bribery, constitutes one aspect of this sickness.¹⁸

The reason is simple. Market forces are propelled by profit motives and there is more profit in deploying money to make more money than building asset-generating plants. Even when capital is employed in setting up manufacturing units, the unhidden desire is to exploit low –

¹⁸ Deva, Satya; 'Corruption' in Bhatnagar, S. and Sharma, S.L.(Ed.); Ess - Ess Pub., New Delhi; 1991.

cost labour. In both cases capital is not used to increase output, productivity and wages, quite the contrary. The end result is to keep productivity and wages low and transfer jobs from the mother country. This way the globalisation drive is spreading unemployment and sustaining poverty.

American economist brings out another damaging effect of globalisation cum technological advance. New technology is necessarily labour saving and drives up existing jobs. Also, the days of the small man, as an active or passive player in economic activities are over. The world is fast moving towards establishing 'the dictatorship of the rich'. And the bad news is that this process is more or less irreversible. Greed, and not the need, has led to corruption.¹⁹

The situation is same in all the countries world over.²⁰ Political leaders have become social – leaders but have failed to give moral leadership and direction to the society. They talk against corruption but are the government power and instruments to protect it or create confusions about the facts of the situation. Concepts of wrong and right are bagged down in the Grey areas of psychology or expediency.

According to prevalent notion, modernity should mean a rational and scientific outlook and an interest in the phenomenal world. However,

¹⁹ op.cit.; Ref 14; pg. 124.

²⁰ ibid.; pg. 96.

due to the historical reasons, a modicum of consumerism has also come to be associated with it. One who goes on seeking more and more items of consumption is considered more modern. Capitalistic values can not be restricted to the accumulation of wealth. Modernisation tends to become such a universal doctrine that the historical uniqueness of different cultures gets smothered under its weight. Too much money is spent on consumer items by the non-communist developing countries only because they treat the USA as their model. The country forgets not only its own individual character but also what this consumerist philosophy is doing to USA.

Consumption has become a central pillar of life in Industrial lands, and is even embedded in social values – opinion surveys in the world's two largest economies – Japan and the United States – show consumerist definitions of success becoming ever more prevalent. West Europe has displayed parallel trends. Per person, the Japanese of today consume more than four times they used to in 1950. At the same time the rate of corruption has also grown with the same rate. In Japan, a shining example of virtue and efficiency to many in Europe and North America, corruption is ever present in public sector. The country was shocked at the seniority of the civil servants involved, but Japanese bureaucrats have extensive powers and are particularly susceptible to corrupt relationship with businessmen.

Like the Japanese, West European consumption levels only one notch below Americans. Taken together France, West Germany and the United Kingdom almost doubled their per capita use of steel, more than doubled their intake of cement and aluminium, and tripled their consumption of paper since mid-century. Just in the first half of the eighties, per capita consumption of frozen prepared meals with their excessive packaging – rose more than 30% in every European country except Finland. In Switzerland jump was 180%. As trade barriers come down in the move towards a single European market by 1992, the prices were likely to fall and product promotion grows more aggressive, boosting consumption.

The West is selling Nigeria stuff they do not need. What they need is help to advance their economy and society. But the West is exploiting the wider public with the help of the top people. Nigeria is a country where people have the latest Mercedes and the biggest TVs and the most modern video sets²¹. And they still live in an iron hut. It is a very materialistic society where only labels matter. The condition is almost same for Indian society where people are fighting for their bare existence. Market is overflowing of luxury goods from foreign markets. These items range from car, TV, to all sorts of edible products. These products

²¹ Moore, Stephen; *Power and Corruption : The rotten core of Government and Big Business*; Bharat Law House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi; 1998; pg. 10.

generate greed in mind and thus generate bad means to satisfy their needs.

Traditional Tibetan economic and religious value systems led to the evolution of successful environmental protection practices. Religion lies deep down in the hearts of the Tibetan. Impossible happened in contentment not consumerism in Tibet, as the influence of Buddhism grew there. Previously they had organised war, raiding and conquering China etc. then it ceased. It was the new religion from India that made the change of heart possible bringing new peace.²²

Inter-linkage of corruption and consumerism is widely known. Contentment is the only remedy for it. A contented person can only think about the betterment of the whole society, otherwise people or so much indulged in satisfying worldly needs that they do not have time and energy left to think about others. To develop sensitivity towards society, person should be contented. Once people are contented with their needs the corrupt practices will come on check. If one is poor while doing meritorious deeds and the lord has given him contentment, he is really rich. A rich man without contentment is a beggar and very poor, one should be content with what he gets from his meritorious deeds.

²² op.cit. ; ref 14 ; pg. 228.

CHAPTER : TWO

Social Change And Corruption

‘Undoubtedly the basic reason of corruption is that the moral and ethical values of “service before self” has been given a go by and the “end justify the means” has taken over’.¹

Nanjundaiya 1992

Corrupt practices lose sensitivity for others and make a man self centered. It is true because if a man is sensitive for the welfare of others, he can not act in a way, which has a negative impact on others. Practicing corruption is not an innate quality of individual. It is an attitude, a tendency, a mental state, which a person develops gradually, and it can be practiced in various ways, at various levels and with various sources.

It is easier to talk about the types, ways, and the magnitude of corruption. But neglecting the fact that magnitude and types of corruption are the further elaboration of the topic. Before going into the detail one should deal with the basic question of why there is corruption? Who are these people who are corrupt? What makes them corrupt? What are the reasons, which are gradually percolating into the lower stratas also to make them corrupt?

There can be various social, political reasons for corruption. It can have positive (1. That corruption is needed to oil the intricate machinery

¹ Pavarala, Vinod; *Interpreting Corruption: Elite Perspective in India*; Sage Pub., New Delhi; 1996; pg. – 79.

of business and politics in South Asian countries.² 2. Corruption can improve economic efficiency by overcoming bureaucratic hurdles.³) as well as negative impact on society. But in large we have always seen negative consequences of it. The basic factor responsible for corruption, in my understanding, is individual “greed”⁴. In some very rare cases only, people forced for corruption; otherwise they willingly practice it according to their power and position at all levels with possible sources.

Individual greed of material things for luxury which leads to consumerism in the form of conspicuous consumption. It is a tendency to acquire more. This is the reason why high salaried people provided with all facilities and amenities are corrupt. And this is also why people at the lower levels are corrupt because they try to imitate them. Western countries are famous for their materialistic, consumerist values. Whereas India famous for its spiritual and contended life style. With the effect of globalisation and liberalisation, there is an intermixing of lifestyle as well as values. As a result Indian spiritual life style is also moving towards consumerist culture. Consumerism as an omnipresent phenomenon it is also not typical of modern advanced societies but prevalent in developing

² Myrdal, Gunnar; *Asian Drama*; Vol. 2; Penguin Press, London; 1968; pg. 939.

³ Ades, A. and Di Tella, R.; ‘The causes and consequences of corruption : A Review of Recent Empirical Contribution’ ; *IDS Bulletin*; Vol. 27; No. 2; 1996; pg. 31-39.

⁴ Chitkara, M.G.; *Consumerism, Crime and Corruption* ; A.P.H.Publishing Corporation, New Delhi; 1999; Chapter 5; pg. 19.

countries as well. In the case of India the process began to appear some twenty years back, from the eighties. India has been predicted as the “next consumer market power house”. Private spending in the country in 1991 was estimated at Rs. 39533 million i.e. 14% increase over the previous year and four fold increase over 1981. Consumerism is deep rooted and not merely confined to the middle class. No less an authority than the planning commission of India reported that incomes have gone up and once eminent position of food in the hierarchy of priorities is giving place to non-food consumer goods. These durables are in high demand in rural India also. Manufacturers are vying with each other to exploit the potential of rural markets. Products are now especially designed for the villagers.⁵ It has become more easier for Indians to acquire foreign values due to certain very basic changes in the structure of the whole society. These changes are very prominent in the field of caste structure, education, urban growth, government policies and economic liberalisation.

These changes have direct impact on changing the pattern of Indian consumption. New pattern is more or less similar to western life style and leading towards consumerism opening a wider hole for corruption and legitimising its practice. These changes can be identified as:

⁵ Sooryamoorthy, R.; *Consumption to Consumerism : In the context of Kerala*; Classical Pub. Company, New Delhi; 1998; pg. 20.

(1) Loosening of the rigid caste structure of the society:

Traditional caste hierarchy, then the order of the day, kept many privileges and prerogatives exclusively for the upper caste and much control was exercised on the life activities of those happened to be the less privileged. Birth solely determined one's social position and his / her development was tied up with caste affiliation. Individuals were never allowed to pursue their own interests in matter related to obtaining education, choosing occupation or gaining deserving social recognition. Social intercourse, social activities and associations were influenced and even determined by the norms of the caste system. Life style and consumption, however, had to be within the limits of prescriptions. The pressure of the system on the life and consumption was so severe that the caste to which people belonged could be identified at the very first sight.⁶ Dress distinctions and distant pollution were part of the foundation of society.⁷ In these circumstances consumption of a particular product was bound for a particular caste. Luxury goods were made only for the upper caste. Lower caste people never tried to acquire those goods because it was prohibited for them.

⁶ Weber, Max; *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*; Free Press, New York; 1958.

⁷op.cit.; Ref 5; pg. 80.

If men are products of circumstances and upbringing, how can they rebel? The answer lies in the recognising, with Karl Marx, that it is men who changes circumstances. The autonomy of the individual flows from the contradictions of capitalism. Thus, while Talcott Parson is right in maintaining that the system inculcates identification among its members. They fail to note that its sickness makes for rebellion also.

Various social reform movements against the age old and out dated customs and practices sowed the seeds of change in the society. Restrictions, losing relevance in the transforming society began to wither away. Caste prescriptions, as a result of reform movements, ceased to influence the consumption of people. The transition of a hierarchical, caste based and hence closed society to an open society had its impact on the consumption pattern of the people. The nature of the society has been losing its rigid structure and form. Changed social structure force people to come out for different avenues of earning by ignoring their own traditional caste based occupation.⁸

After independence much emphasis was given on equality. It was dealt on the first point in fundamental rights.⁹ "Equality before law" dissolved all the boundaries of caste and thus consumption product once

⁸ Sharma, K.L.; *Essays on Social Stratification*; (Ed.); Rawat Pub.;1980.

⁹ Kashyap, Subhash C.; *Our Constitution*; National Book Trust, New Delhi; 1994; pg. 89.

prohibited to particular section became accessible to them. This increased the demand of products. Especially of that luxury goods which were prohibited earlier.

(2) Impact of modern education:

Loose caste boundaries opened the gates of modern education for those who had been deprived of it for long. Modern education heralded the era of change. It raised the social general standard of people, multiplied their wants as evident from the change in the taste of the educated elite. They were fascinated by and longed for everything western including house, food, dress and luxuries.¹⁰ Education paved the way to gainful occupations other than traditional that chained them to misery. Ascriptive criteria gave way to achieved criteria that became the mark of one's social position in the society. Rather than membership of caste or religion, education and occupation mattered.¹¹

Education started producing better opportunities of consumption by abolishing hard boundaries of caste affiliation on food, shelter, dress pattern, social intercourse and occupational opportunities. Opportunities were widened enabling them to consume things without any inhibition or restriction.

¹⁰ Pandey, Prem Narayein; *Education and Social Mobility*; 1988; pg. 112-119.

¹¹ op.cit.; Ref 5; pg. 82.

There is no direct link between education and corrupt personalities, but, education develops aspirations among people, and it is effective in all sections irrespective of their caste and class. Aspirations are generally high among educated backward caste and thus they are more inclined for their upward mobility. This results in giving way to consumerism, which has become an easy way to step up on mobility ladder.¹²

Soon, consumption became the yardstick to gauge one's socio – economic status. Consumption at a higher level or at least in parity with others is now indispensable to maintain as well as to secure a better social standing. In the following years consumption of things which bear a demonstrative and luxurious appeal earned acceptance in the society. The importance attached to consumption and its conspicuous nature in turn gave rise to increased rate of luxury consumption.¹³

(3) Role of urban growth and industrial development:

Urban growth provides a highly concentrated and accessible mass consumer market (Jones 1963: 17) ¹⁴. Concentration of mass market in urban areas can generate new needs in urban dwellers, as accessibility

¹² op.cit.; Ref 10; pg. 93-102.

¹³ op.cit.; Ref 5; pg. 83.

¹⁴ Johnes, Peter d'A; *The Consumer Society : A History of American Capitalism ;* Pelican Books; Reprint 1965; pg. 12.

of things is an essential condition in encouraging consumption of a variety of items. Proliferation of products and services can very well attract and increase the number of consumers.

In another way urbanisation swats consumption pattern, contracts with urban environment. Such contacts intermittent or otherwise make people aware of the possibilities of need fulfillment. Proximity to urban markets and availability of merchandise with minimum effort and less constraint lead to growth of demand for goods. When markets are far away from residences, shopping activities and consumption are bound to be limited. Easy availability quickens the decision making and purchase.¹⁵

In consumer societies as well as in developed and industrialised countries, a shift in the emphasis of production is apparent. Industries based on the production of consumer goods ranging from cosmetics to sophisticated electronic devices normally flourish in advanced countries. Manufacturing of goods aimed at satisfying the secondary needs of people would gain precedence over the other and subsequently the demand for such goods would grow. Increased purchasing power combined with the effective but misleading marketing propaganda helps sustain such industries.

¹⁵ op.cit.; Ref 5; pg. 86.

(4) Government policies:

As the policies of the state are responsible for the pace of industrial growth, support from the state becomes crucial. In the then socialist countries, for instance, production of consumer goods was restricted by the state. But, in India, the government has initiated steps in the form of a series of policies, known as liberalisation policies, in the eighties in order to encourage the industry. These policy measures had a bearing on the advancement of consumer durable industries. Again since 1991, serious changes in the economic policy referred to as the new economic policy furthered the demand for consumer durables leading to an increase in the consumption of such items. Production increased with a relative drop in the prices and it is reflected in the people's propensity in favour of consumer durables.

The New Economic Policy begun with the union budget of 1991, was necessitated by the crisis of balance of payment, immediately after the Gulf War of 1990. India's foreign debt during this period touched an ever time high. Against this backdrop the NEP¹⁶ aimed at the stabilisation of containing foreign exchange deficit and structural adjustment of the economy. Internal and external liberalisation is the core of the new policy, which is devised in the context of market friendly approach. Industrial licensing became more liberal. Least control was

¹⁶ New Economic Policy

exercised on the manufacture of consumer goods, taxes lowered, price control lifted, products delicensed, customs duty decreased on electronic goods. Import of components was granted.

The structural change in the economy envisaged opening up for foreign investment, deregulation of economy, privatisation of public sector, trade liberalisation and convertibility of Indian rupees. Customs duties on imported foreign raw material, intermediaries and finished capital goods have been sliced considerably. The government of India during the short span of three years since the beginning of reforms had approved foreign investment worth million rupees. Investments were made more significantly in the consumer goods industry hoping to reap in burgeoning market. The advent of multinational companies with the unstinted support from the government sounded the death knell of number of Indian industries.¹⁷

In an article, A.R.Desai states: “that the provision of purchasing power of this special enclave is achieved by adopting measures like raising salaries and perquisites to those in service, trade and manufacturing through tax exemption or reduction and pumping money via loans at subsidised interest rate to promote markets for luxury goods.”¹⁸

¹⁷ op.cit.; Ref 5; pg. 102-103.

¹⁸ Desai, A.R.; ‘Trends of change in Indian society since Independence’ ; Economic and Political Weekly; Vol. XXIV; No. 33; pg. 1888.

(5) Change in definition of social status:

Now social status is judged by what they (people) have rather than what they (people) are. The possession of material goods seems to have become the *sine qua non* of life. Their inevitability results in a scramble for acquisition of glittering prizes, irrespective of means adopted.¹⁹

The possession of wealth presently assumes the character of an independent and definitive basis of esteem. The possession of goods whether acquired aggressively by one's own exertion or passively by transmission through inheritance from others, becomes a conventional basis of reputability. Wealth is now intrinsically honourable and confers honour on its possessor. In order to hold the esteem of men, it is not sufficient merely to possess wealth or power. The wealth or power must be put in evidence, for esteem is awarded only on evidence.

This tendency to acquire and show has given way to consumerism which leads to lack of personal virtue or a sense of morality.

(6) Media as a catalytic agent:

Production alone is not sufficient to entice consumers. It has to be followed by effective advertising propaganda. Media and advertisements

¹⁹ op.cit.; Ref 1; pg. 28.

took up the dual role of supplying information about products and invented needs in them. Liberalisation policies gave a fillip to the advertising industry and seem to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of reforms.

In an article, M.N.Srinivas says:

‘Consumerism is heavily dependent on advertising and the advertising is booming. Indian newspapers and journals now a days regularly bring out lush supplements with multi coloured illustrations on glossy paper. Looking at them one wonders whether India is a poor country. Advertisement figure on the TV with glamorous film, sports and athletic stars urging the viewers to buy washing machine, shaving soap, mouth wash, tooth paste, textiles shoes and so on. TV watching has become addiction with large number of people and I learn that even in a remote small temple town like Melkot (in south Karnataka) over a hundred houses have TV and CNN connection. It is alleged that priest hurry through their worship in the temples to go home to watch their favourite programme’.²⁰ (1993:937)

Role of media can not be summarised only for the advertisement of the product but it is also for creating need for the product. Advertisement on TVs, Videos with audiovisual facilities create an extensive need for the

²⁰ Srinivas, M.N.; ‘Changing values in Indian today’; Economic and Political Weekly; May 8 ,1993; 28(19); pg. 937.

product. Advertisement are generally so impressive that the viewers start craving for it. And this tendency multiplies with the launch of new product in the market. Information about the products of their advanced technology generally confuses customers but it also compels customers to be updated. This has created a race among customers who had never imagined of acquiring a particular product earlier.

(7) Role of Market:

In 1995, four years after the new economic program was launched, the Indian market was flooded with new and fancy consumer goods. Privatisation of various sectors of economy picked up pace, and foreign investment went up. Media, advertisement and market flooded with various fancy products became successful in creating needs for the products but creation of wants has also to be followed by the availability and affordability of products. Credit facilities provided by the market thus came in handy for the consumers. In two ways credit facilities foster sales. Firstly, the cost of the product does not deter the consumer from aspiring to possess it. The advantage of paying its easy installments serves as a potent force to neglect the affordability aspect of the product. Things come within his reach due to the advantage of credit facility. Secondly, the consumers do not feel any more that the highly priced

products are not meant for them. Credit facility has succeeded in breaking of class needs.²¹

Thus social and economic change has created a new structure in the society, where intermixing of castes and distinction of class has become prominent. Irrespective of caste, class is an open system in which upward mobility is always easier than in the caste. Class is an economic phenomenon, which is decided by the possession of wealth directly, or indirectly. Race for moving from lower class to upper class status has given rise to consumerism. In this race values and morality are always neglected. It is hard to say corruption leads to consumerism or consumerism leads to corruption. But both are interrelated because both have to do something with “individual greed”.

Going into the sociology of knowledge of the people who are corrupt. This study can be divided into two parts. First, of those who were deprived from certain consumption earlier (like lower castes particularly) and now they have got access to these facilities after socio economic changes. Now with the advent of new economic policies their affordability and accessibility has increased. This has made them conspicuous consumers. Second are those who have always enjoyed high status as well as various facilities and amenities. So in the phase of economic liberalisation they are now moved towards more sophisticated

²¹ op.cit.; Ref 5; pg. 115.

and fancy foreign products. They had already much, so now they want to acquire more because their wants has transformed from local to global.

To study corruption, if one talks about big scandals and try to find out who are those on the top levels who are involved in these practices? It will be very surprising to know that most of these people on the top level are of higher caste and class. For the convenience they are divided into fine groups.

1. Bureaucrats
2. Businessman (Industrial leaders)
3. Journalists (Media elite)
4. Lawyers
5. Politicians

Location of the groups:

Bureaucrats: - Members of India's elite administrative service have a narrow social base. Although nearly 20 percent of recruits since independence have been from the low or backward caste in India, a majority of higher civil servant have upper caste and middle and upper - middle class background and are of urban origin. Other studies on the socio-economic background of the Indian bureaucracy as summarised by Sharma (1978) also suggest that members of the higher services are largely drawn from the urban, salaried and professional middle class in the country. Individuals with business backgrounds, farmers and agricultural labourers are grossly underrepresented in the elite services

(Bhambri 1972).²² With respect to the rural / agricultural classes, however, the rich, land owning community have found some representation in the IAS and IPS.²³

Businessman / Industrial leaders: - Like the bureaucratic elite, most of the industrialists had urban, upper class or upper-middle class backgrounds and belonged mostly to the upper caste.²⁴

Journalists (Media elite): - On the whole, the social composition of the journalists seemed to orient them towards the values and ideology of the urban, educated middle class.²⁵ It is hard to distinguish the caste and class of this group particularly but majority is from educated middle class.

Lawyers: - Percentage of lawyers is higher from the class where their ancestors were in same occupation.²⁶ Because it is a prestigious job with high salary, they can be located into higher middle class.

Politicians: - The social composition of Indian politicians has been changing gradually since independence. Prior to 1947, many of the leaders in freedom struggle were professionals, educators, social workers, businessmen and aristocrats. In the first constituted Lok Sabha in 1952,

²²Bhambri, C.P.; *Administrators in a changing society* ; Saraswati Printing House, Delhi; 1972; pg. 97.

²³ op.cit.; Ref 1; pg. 30.

²⁴ ibid.; pg. 31.

²⁵ ibid.; pg. 38.

²⁶ Gandhi, J.S.; *Lawyers and Touts*; 1982.

about twenty two percent of the members were lawyers and an equal number were full time social workers. By 1971, the percentage of lawyers and social workers had dwindled to about 17 percent and the percentage of those in agricultural occupation had gone up from 14 to about 34 (Kochanek, 1974:66.67)²⁷. In 1984, the number of agriculturist in the Lok Sabha was reported to be about thirty eight percent (Kashyap 1985).²⁸ In the state assemblies, the percentage of legislators with farming backgrounds is significantly higher. One major reason for this rise in agrarian interest in politics is said to be the “green revolution” in India, which has substantially improved the economic power of the owners of large and medium sized land holdings. A major consequence of this social composition of politicians has been the infusion of a feudal political culture, which has scant respect for modern democratic institutions and a strong penchant for the personality cult and sycophancy. The domination of the upper castes is shown to be even greater if one examines the social composition of the ministers in the state cabinet (Reddy, 1989:304-307)²⁹

²⁷ Kochanek, Stanley A.; *Business and Politics in India*; University of California Press; 1974.

²⁸ Kashyap, Subhash C.; ‘The Eighth Lok Sabha : A Profile of Its Members’ ; *Indian and Foreign Review*; May 31, 1985.

²⁹ Reddy, G. Ram; ‘The politics of Accommodation : Caste, class and dominance in Andhra Pradesh’ in Frankel, Francine R. and Rao, M.S.A.; *Dominance and State Power in Modern India : Decline for a social order*, Vol. 1; (Ed.); Oxford University Press, New Delhi; pg. 265-321.

Douglas says – “ The relationship between the political leaders and people is a reciprocal one. The standards of the people influence those of public officials, and it is hard to develop honest officials in a corrupt society. But it is equally true that high standards on the part of officials and public leaders raise the level of the whole community.”

Corruption is a universal phenomenon. Any state of world or any section irrespective of caste, creed and nationality is not untouched with this problem. But corruption on different layers has different psychology and social reasons, especially in India. Corruption on lower levels are less significant (because it is there generally to meet their needs, or it is through imitation). People on the lower levels have limited power and sources other than that they have very limited people approaching them. People who are approaching them are also of the lower standards and they generally come for small works.

Corruption on higher levels is of much significance and can be used as an eye opener. In Indian society it is almost clear that higher caste people have acquired higher positions after independence. Their involvement in corruption is mainly because: -

(A) Deep roots of joint family system:

People on the higher levels are highly attached with their familiar roots and try to do favours for their cousins when they have power to operate.²⁴ and secondly, they want to save for the next generation as

they want their next generation also to be in the well off positions to maintain caste and class dignity.³⁰

(B) Their own thrust and negligence of their role in the society:

Loop holes in the Indian legal system and loss of traditional Indian Values can be two catalysts for enhancing corruption among the top layer power holders. It becomes hard to believe that social, political and spiritual leaders just tear off the fabric of faith of their followers by their corrupt practices for greed. There is nobody to check their code of conduct because they are the makers of it. Their possessions are huge in amount. They are having multiple bungalows in all the prime locations of metropolitans. They are having foreign bank accounts and lockers with dollars and kilos of gold and diamond. Their children are studying in the expensive foreign schools and universities may or may be without merit. Their house is full of luxury goods and oestantatious display of wealth.³¹ Nothing can beat their greed. No morality, no values, no care for general public faith on them and operating system. Still they are caught red handed by some anti – corruption agency because of their indulgence in some corrupt practices.

³⁰ op.cit.; Ref 1; pg. 120.

³¹ Corruption cases against Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Ms.Jayalalita.
Corruption cases against Telecommunication Minister Sh. Sukh Ram.
Corruption cases against Bihar Chief Minister Sh. Laloo Prasad Yadav.
Corruption cases against Prime Minister Sh. P.V.Narsimha Rao.

Anad Swaroop Misa writes: -

“For every enlightened profession and calling there exists a code of ethics. Such a code has no legal sanction in the sense that it is not embodied in legislation enactment. It is self imposed compilation of restrictive conditions drawn up by the representatives of the profession or the calling as the case may be.”³²

Consumerism has a wider impact on enhancing corruption on lower levels and on the higher levels as well. Middle class is in a position where it has to be influenced. Economy plays a major role in shaping society and thus it should be checked through strong legal system.

³² Misa, Anand Swarup; Principles and practices of judicial propriety; 1986; pg. 4.

CHAPTER 3

Value Change And Corruption

As early as the sixties, economic experts had started wondering whether much of the detailed economic decision-making that government functionaries had been doing directly could not be left to various markets. Subsequently, experiment with domestic liberalisation began in mid seventies. In 1975, a scheme was introduced which provided for an increase in licensed capacity up to maximum of 25 percent in a five-year period. Other measures included regularisation of capacities in excess of authorised capacities for Appendix of industries. The main emphasis during the seventies was on reducing the restrictive and complex features of licensing policy. Soon after the resumption of power in 1984, the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government brought about a sea change in terms of liberalisation of licensing policy in favour of large business houses particularly in terms of making them free. The main aim of the New Industrial Policy was to unshackle the Indian industrial economy from the cow webs of unnecessary bureaucratic control, to introduce liberalisation with a view to integrate the Indian economy with world economy, to remove restriction on direct foreign investment as also to free domestic entrepreneur from the restriction of MRTP Act.¹ Besides the policy aimed to

¹ Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices.

shed the load of the public enterprise, which have shown a very low rate of return or are incurring losses over the years.

Above all, the donor organisation believed that corruption is a political problem and the cure is liberalisation. Trade liberalisation, they conclude, will wipe out the opportunities big time graft characterised by collusive arrangement between large firms and government.

The cure has been disappointing. Consider South Asia – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where no national government has been reelected successively during the 1990s because none has been able to control corruption .²

Meanwhile in India, the emergence of a middle class with perhaps 100 million members along with the liberalisation of the consumer market and the introduction of buying on credit, has led to explosive growth in sales of everything from automobile and motorbikes to TVs and frozen dinner. The Wall Street Journal says – “the traditional conservative Indian who believes in modesty and saving is gradually giving way to a new generation that thinks as freely as it spends”.³

² Chitkara, M.G.; *Corruption 'n' Cure*; A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi; 1996; pg. – 160.

³ *ibid.*; pg.-162.

One of the factors that is often cited as being responsible for this apparent change in the value system is the rising wave of consumerism sweeping the country. This was largely a result of a series of measures initiated by the government since the early 1980s to move the country towards a free market economy. Consumer goods, which used to be called 'luxury goods', started saturating the market. As the chief reporter of a Telugu newspaper put it, 'the lifestyles of our people are undergoing a massive change'. People, he asserted, are 'hankering for commodities, which were considered luxuries until recently, things like, refrigerators, colour television, a music system, a scooter or a car'. Several bureaucrats, judges and journalists interviewed for this study tended to blame the new lifestyles generated by this boom for the corrupt behaviour of people. A top bureaucrat in Andhra Pradesh, who was at one time the director general of police, for instance, felt strongly that this consumerism plays a major role in promoting corruption.⁴

If we have corruption, it is mainly because of the aspiration of certain people have certain things in life. Consumerism is a primary culprit. These days through colourful television advertising people are coming to know of

⁴ Pavarala, Vinod; *Interpreting Corruption: Elite Perspective in India*; Sage Pub., New Delhi; 1996; pg. 115.

fascinating consumer goods. So some people are tempted to enjoy the good things of life beyond their means and perhaps give a better life to their children, and to marry them off well.⁵

The social pressure to acquire these goods, according to many respondents, forces people to live beyond legitimate means.

It seems, the possession of these products determines a person's position in the stratification system; the government owned Maruti Suzuki car becomes the symbol of a new caste -like structure. These pressures, according to a bureaucrat who came from a predominantly metropolitan background and a family of professionals, are more acute for the newly emerging middle class, constituted largely of educated, urban professionals and small entrepreneurs. It is this group that is said to be beset by a need for status maintenance.⁶

The middle class situation is the most important factor in any discussion of corruption in India. They are most conscious of the need to maintain their status.

The middle class professionals frequently engage in corruption because of some kind of anticipatory socialisation i.e. the patterned, but often unplanned, learning of a role in advance of assuming it. There is an

⁵ *ibid.* ; pg. 115.

⁶ *ibid.* ; pg. 115-6.

anticipatory learning of attitudes that may result in forming certain expectations for one's own life situation and for that of family members.⁷

A young IAS officer who grows up in a lower middle class family and who admitted his great ambition for his wife and child. He wanted to buy diamonds for his wife, to own a house in a posh neighbourhood, to send his child to expensive public schools. The moment one feels that these are minimum basic needs for someone in his position, and if one is not able to meet those needs within one's legal means, there is bound to be frustration, leading to corruption.⁸

Other elite such as judges, politicians and journalists also brought out the idea of this kind of anticipatory socialization and its effect on the functioning of professionals.

The second aspect of the middle class situation is emulative consumption; an idea, which has repeatedly been expressed during the course of interviews in clichés such as 'keeping up with the Joneses'. While the notion itself is simple and one that cuts across many cultures, in a society like India, with its glaring disparities of wealth and status, the impact of such imitative behaviour is said to be deleterious, often compelling people to resort to corrupt means.⁹

⁷ *ibid.*; pg. 116.

⁸ *ibid.*; pg. 116.

⁹ *ibid.*; pg. 117.

Thus according to many elite, the general 'social acceptance' of corruption combined with a rising wave of consumerism in urban Indian have tended to promote an atmosphere for wide spread corruption. The middle class, especially, are seen by many elite as being compelled to become corrupt by a certain degree of anticipatory socialisation about their professional roles as well as by a social pressure to emulate the consumption patterns of one's peers.

As Carl Marx says – 'ideas belong to the realm of the superstructure and are determined by the economic infrastructure'.¹⁰ Marx saw humans as being unique by virtue of their conscious awareness of themselves and their situation. They are capable of self-reflection and hence, assessment of their positions in society. Such consciousness arises out of people's daily existence and is not a realm of ideas that is somehow independent of material world. For Marx, people produce their ideas and conceptions of the world in light of the social structure in which they are born, raised and live.¹¹ these ideas are referred as 'ruling class ideology'. Ideology is a distortion of reality, a false picture of society. It blinds members of society to

¹⁰ Abraham, Francis and Morgan, John Henry; *Social Thought* ; Macmillan India Ltd., Madras; 1996; pg. 33.

¹¹ Turner, Jonathan H.; *The Structure of Social Theory* ; Rawat Pub.; 1987; pg. 132.

the contradictions and conflicts of interest, which are built into their relationship. As a result they tend to accept their situation as normal and natural, right and proper.¹²

In this phase of liberalisation and privatisation market is operated by different shareholders, but their motif behind operation is similar i.e. profit maximisation. Change in economy has changed the idea of general Indian consumers about life style and consumption pattern. In this case Indian spiritual thinking, high value and contented life style is replaced by materialistic and consumerist ideology. Value change can be treated at two levels:

1. On system level : movement towards globalisation , industrialisation and consumerism etc.
2. On individual level: which has changed the aspirations, ambitions and attitudes of an individual.

(I) Value change on system level :-

System acts as a mind – moulding instrument. According to which social values and personal preferences change. These changes are applied

¹² Haralambos, M.; *Sociology : Themes and Perspectives* ; Oxford University Press, New Delhi ; pg.15.

on the wider whole of society and thus it influences individuals. It is hard to stay away from these changes because it has a strong force of influence. In fact it is well set fact that individuals are moulded according to society. Changes on the system level can be identified as: -

(1) Industrialisation :

Development in science and technology can better the quality of life situation. It would also direct a society to the path of industrialisation.

Industrial growth brings in not only prosperity but also other social processes, namely urbanisation and modernisation as part of it. Products multiply on an enormous scale and products are devised for human consumption. Towns and cities evolve and modern amenities and facilities work as a potent force in attracting people to join the urban fold. Markets come up and stretch their tentacles. The prime objective being increase in consumption, or, its amendment at least, new technology is widely employed to design exceptional marketing mechanisms. As markets are flooded with merchandise, each visit to market helps the consumer to realise the new hidden needs and choices available for fulfillment. Consumers are presented with multiple choices to fulfil the needs created in them by the transforming market situation. Needs continue to multiply at a pace dictated by the given environment. Erstwhile needs and goods are replaced by new ones. Advanced marketing techniques like Super – Bazar,

self service shop, misleading advertising propaganda that normally entice the consumer boosts the scale as well as enlarge the number of consumers.

(2) Liberalisation and globalisation: -

No less important are the policies of the state that determine the nature of industrial production and preferences of the country. If the state opts for a liberalised policy entailing free imports, less restriction and encouragement to MNCs to invest consumption is to change by leaps and bounds. Needless to say, MNCs are keen on investing money in the consumer goods sector rather than in any other sector which in developing countries offer tremendous potential for profit (India, of course, has already begun to witness this trend).

However industrialisation need not necessarily take place in backward societies in desired direction and the attendant process of modernisation and urbanisation will take time to show up, the absence of which will not, however, prevent the change of consumption habits and preferences of people from occurring. The obvious reason is nothing but the world, which has shrunk into a global village. No society remains isolated for long in this era of information explosion. Exposure to other cultures and ways to living is sufficient to alter the current consumption habits and preferences of people.

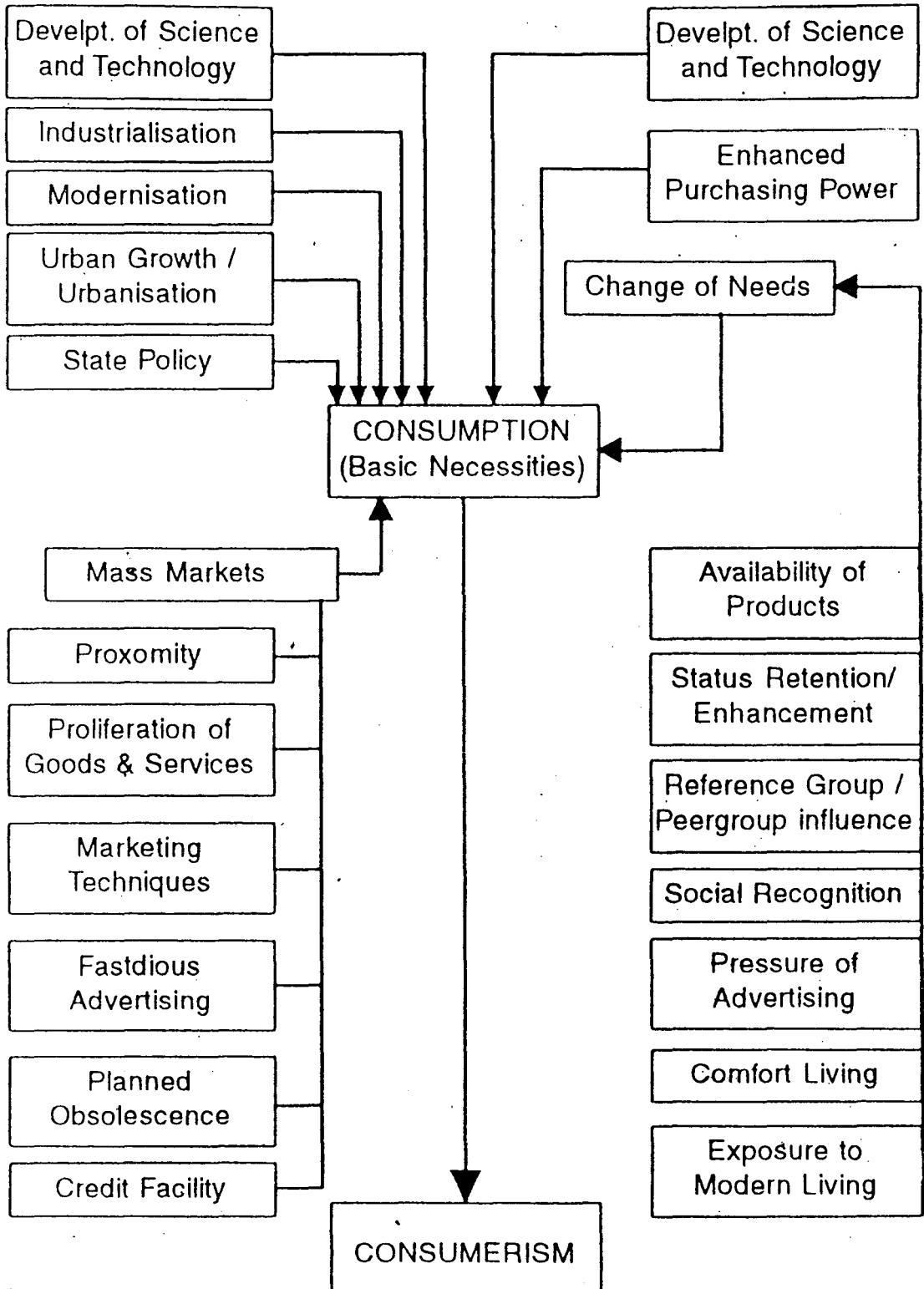
(2) Consumerism :-

On the other hand, consumers are influenced by the same social environment. A change in social surroundings due to industrial growth, urbanisation and modernisation accelerates the shift from consumption to consumerism. Improvement in disposable income or windfall income can give a stimulus to the change, which will be ensued by a number of other factors. For the consumers in a development region, new goods and products are appealing as they can bring about tangible change in their life situations. Consumption of commodities not actually meant for the satisfaction of the basic needs, however, is not merely aimed at creating qualitatively higher standards of living. But when modern things are made available in abundance and when a considerable part of population regards it proper for their style of living, consumption assumes new dimensions other than the simple utility. Production is always accompanied by advertising, which can not be easily neglected by an ordinary consumer unless the consumer is adamant of retaining consumption habits. Purchasing decisions are influenced by advertising, which is calculated to modify consumption in favour of new products. Advertisement also stir up the status consciousness of consumers which eventually force the consumer to consider that the products are essential either to retain or enhance present social position. Once the society loses its traditional characteristic

Path to Consumerism

SOCIAL
AMBIENCE

CONSUMER



and misplaces descriptive criteria of status assessment, consumption of such products gains prominence. Display of wealth through possessions of goods and ability to utilise services gather precedence over other prevailing ascribed criteria. Consumption of these sorts turns to be inevitable when it is acceptable in the society. Gradually consumption becomes the accepted badge of social recognition and the lack of inability to consume in the similar fashion would amount to loss of status and prestige. Veblen¹³, in his study, found that possession of goods is necessary to have any reputable standing in the community and hence it is indispensable.

(II) Value change on individual level: -

A materialistic philosophy generated by new liberal economy compels Indians for being consumerist and materialistic.¹⁴ Materialism, as a personality like trait, distinguishes between individuals who regard possessions as particularly essential to their identities and lives, and those for whom possessions are secondary. Researchers testing a new materialism

¹³ Veblen, Thorstein; *The theory of the Leisure Class* ; New York ;1899; Reprint 1912.

¹⁴ Schiffman, G. Leon and Kanuk, Leslie Lazer; *Consumer Behaviour* ; (5th Edition) Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd.; 1994.

scale have found some general support for the following characteristic observations about materialistic people:

1. They especially value acquiring and showing off possessions,
2. They are particularly self centered and selfish,
3. They seek lifestyles full of possessions (e.g.- they desire to have lots of 'things' rather than a simple uncultured lifestyle), and
4. Their many possessions do not give them greater personal satisfaction (i.e. possessions do not lead to greater happiness)

Simple items from a materialism scale: -

Success:

1. The things I own say a lot about how well I am doing in life.
2. I do not pay much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. **
3. I like to own things that impress people.

Centrality:

1. I enjoy spending money on things that are not practical.
 2. I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.**
 3. Buying things give me a lot of pleasure.
-

Happiness:

1. I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.
2. I have all the things; I really need to enjoy life. **
3. It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can not afford to buy all the things I'd like.¹⁵

Most of an individual's specific needs are dormant much of the time. The arousal of any particular set of needs at a specific point in time may be caused by internal stimuli found in the individual's physiological condition, emotional or cognitive processes, or by stimuli in the outside environment.

Individuals most prone to corruption: -

(1) Those who sacrifice themselves to the altar of materialism. Those who believe that power and money are the ultimate goals and purposes of life and the public service is the best opportunity to get them.

(2) Those who wittingly or unwittingly made idols of their own family. Those who believe everything done for their family are good, including acts of cheating, stealing, killing and others.

¹⁵ (Items with an (**)) are negatively worded and are scored inversely) Marsha, L. Richines and Scott, Dawson; 'A consumer values orientation for materialism and its measurement : Scale development and validation' ; Journal of consumer research; No. 19; Dec 1992; pg. 310.

(3) Those who sold their soul to their bosses. Those who naively believe that their boss are always right. His whims are their commands, unmindful of the legal and moral implications of such commands.

(4) That sole ethical principle is pragmatism. Those who believe that might are right, the end justifies the means and the only rule of life is the survival of the fittest.

(5) Individuals who have fallen completely in love with their business. To them, everything and everybody is for sale “if the price is right”.

(6) Employees in the revenue raising, revenue spending or regulatory functions with discretionary powers to resolve issues, specially if they are in regular contact with clients and have tacit approval of top officials to engage in unethical practices.¹⁶

Consumption pattern of Indian consumers is a rational choice made by them. In one hand he sees reliability. Durability and price, on the other hand, social values attached with the product. It is because of the association between one or more specific social groups. A consumer's choice gains social value by being linked with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socio-economic and cultural ethnic groups (i.e. reference group). Choices involving highly visible products (e.g. cloths, automobile,

¹⁶ 16Ronald, Antonio C.; 'A Brief Psychology of Corruption' ; Psychology, A Journal of Human Behaviour ; Vol. 26; Nov 4,1989; pg.- 54.

accessories etc) and goods and services to be 'socially shared' (e.g. gifts, products used in entertaining) are often driven by social value.¹⁷

Contradictions between Two: -

Globalisation, industrialisation and consumerism are followed by individual aspiration, ambition and attitudinal change. These changes are so apparent that individuals, who try to neglect it, are also trapped by this consumerist culture. Those who have legal means they can satisfy their demand for the products at any level. But the contradiction starts when there is no means to satisfy these wants. When these wants are not satisfied with the means available to the individual, it leads to frustration and thus forces for deviant behaviour. Deviant behaviour can result various types of social crimes as – theft, murders, accidents, etc. And if the person is in a situation to fulfil his demands through corrupt practices, he very easily moves for that. This leads to corruption in our society. In fact, some of the very basic problems are arisen due to the prevalence of these contradictions in society. Dowry and bride burning, suicide by young girls are the common problem of the same origin. There are several cases we read daily in the newspapers related to bride burning for dowry demands, or unmarried young girls are forced for suicide, because they feel their parents can not

¹⁷ op.cit.; Ref 14; pg. 654-655.

fulfil the demands of dowry for their marriages. Young school and college going students are forced for theft and murder, as their parents cannot support them financially to fulfil their demands. Consumerism can be said as the main reason behind these problems.

The demand for dowry is increasingly affecting both the middle and lower classes where economic constraints are real. For those who make these demands, it is the quickest way to improve standard of living. For those who go beyond their permissible limits to give dowry, it is a question of maintaining a respectable status in the society. Therefore, irrespective of the legislative measures, one does not see the system of dowry making an exit of our society. On the contrary, one finds, and particularly in the lower sections of the middle class, that people will not mind paying even through their noses because giving handsome dowry is after all a symbol of their status in the society.¹⁸

In every society and at all stages of growth and development and in all ages there is corruption in one form or the other. This is because the urges to go corrupt and circumstances providing an incentive to corruption are universally prevalent.

¹⁸ Kohli, M.; 'Social dynamics of corruption in India' ; in Bhatnagar, S. and Sharma, S.L.; *corruption in Indian politics and bureaucracy*; 1991; Ess – Ess Pub., New Delhi; pg. 13-16.

(1) The process of development must be held responsible for abetting corruption in India. An uneven process of development wherein the advantage of development do not reach all parts of the state in an equitable manner and among all segments of society, the neglected parts and sections are motivated to derive the fruits of development through illegal means. Corruption therefore becomes a remedial step to correct the imbalance left in the developmental process.

(2) In the newly emergent states, especially, if they have adopted a democratic set up of government, competition among different groups to gain power is intensified. To succeed in this competitive activity the use of money power finds itself a new role resulting into the use of money power finds a new role resulting into the use of malpractices both in the political and economic areas of social life. Use of money power in elections, promises of incentives and disincentives, through which notes are collected, are all the manifestations of this type of corruption.

(3) Indian society is a highly stratified society. The divisions in the society are not only on economic lines but there are several bases on which the society is divided. There is caste, there is religion, and there is language and so on. In spite of the fact that the constitution proclaimed several decades to build an egalitarian society and a number of socialistic resolutions were adopted, these differences still exist. In such a situation

the leveling process is sought to be achieved through corrupt means. The neglected and the lower sections in the society seek to exact justice through bribes and even criminal practices. Where constitutional, legal and rational recourses fail, the search for alternate model begins. Hence there are some inbuilt weaknesses in Indian society which give rise to corruption.

As long as the distribution of resources is unequal in an in egalitarian society, discontentment would creep in among a sizable section of the population who will find extremely hard to cope with the situation thrown up by consumerism. Due to the lack of resources at their disposal, the struggle to maintain living level as with others is bound to widen – the chasm between those who can afford to practice consumerism and others who can not, and the repercussions would be unpredictable.

Eminent sociologist M.N.Srinivas warns – “when the rich and middle class go in for consumerism the gulf between them and the poor will widen even further. Since, the richest villagers are also victims of consumerism, the rich poor divide will sharpen in rural areas also. Given the tensions which already exist viz.- caste, religion, language, region and low status, consumerism might prove to be the last straw on the backs of the poor”.¹⁹

¹⁹ Srinivas, M.N.; ‘Changing values in Indian today’; Economic and Political Weekly; May 8 ,1993; 28(19); pg. 934.

In the colonial societies like India 'class structure is probably the steepest one. This steepness being accentuated by the differences between the traditional and the modern sectors'.²⁰ In other words there are unprecedented inequalities of wealth and power. Now, the contradictions of a society with structures and processes are likely to be very sharp. Limited resources but great expectations, great poverty but high aspirations, high politicisation but weak influence of public opinion, and weakly - knit organisations but powerful leaders. It is suggested that this pattern is responsible for causing the acute corruption, which are found in our society.

An essential feature of democratisation and modernisation of society is the transformation of narrow sectarian and parochial loyalties into much larger and all embracing institutions of the state. Despite the operation of democratic polity for half a century, this process has made very slow progress in India. People are still more loyal to their kin, caste, clan and community than to the larger secular institutions of the state. This results in the sacrifice of societal goals for narrower identities and promotes nepotism, favouritism and corruption .²¹

²⁰ Eisenstadt, S.N.; 'Modernisation : Protest and change (1969)' ; in Bhatnagar, S. and Sharma, S.L.; *Corruption in Indian Politics and Bureaucracy*; 1991; Ess - Ess Pub., New Delhi; pg. 23.

²¹ op.cit. ; Ref 18; pg. 16.

Owners of goods look down upon the non-owners, and the social distance is kept deliberately at an unapproachable length. Consumption by the affluent segment leaves only little for others. Consumerism in reality would improve only the life situation of the affluent and the chasm will widen not only socially but also economically.

CONCLUSION

“The national ideals of India are renunciation and service; intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself”. He further adds: “what the world wants is character”.

Swami Vivekananda.

With rampant corruption and sharp deterioration in the standards of public morality, it is not surprising that India is now categorised as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Recently, this was reaffirmed in a statistical index drawn up by a German non- government organisation, Transparency International; which measured perceptions of corruption in 41 countries by polling international businessmen, financial journalists. The survey placed India among the seven most corrupt countries.¹

Anyone attempting sociological analysis of corruption will eventually be confronted by a methodological problem. Accepted and generally applied methods of social research such as interviews, the questionnaire and statistical analysis can not be applied here as long as corruption is considered as a shady transaction. The most that a sociologist can do is to observe the phenomenon and its effects and to gather as much confidential information as possible. Even public

¹ Guhan, S. and Paul, Samuel; *Corruption in India : Agenda for action*; Vision Books Pub., New Delhi; 1997; pg. 60.

disclosure of corruption such as those accompanying a fallen regime do not reveal as much as there is to be revealed.²

Several characteristics of corruption make it different to trace its course, expose it and effectively punish the culprits. Corrupt transactions take place in secrecy. In collusive corruption, the mutual interest between the recipient and the source of bribery makes it different to unearth the evidence. In extortionate corruption, the victims are intermediate. Above all, corrupt politicians and officials who occupy high positions in Government are in a position to suppress evidence or resort to threat or inducement because of their privileged access to government records. Further, legal processes involved in tackling corruption - as is generally the case with the Indian legal system as a whole are cumbersome, expensive and time consuming.

It naturally follows that if the society and the government or administration justifies their purpose for which they were brought into existence, we may then hope for a world free of corruption. If the government is corrupt, society is bound to be corrupt, if the society is corrupt, corruption is sure to pervade different walks of individual's life.

It is true that individual ethical behaviour also depends upon the ethical value of the society. Some scholars argue that no anti-

² Alatas, Syed Hussein; *Corruption and the destiny of Asia*; 1999; pg. 1.

corruption strategy is effective unless it is supported by the ethical values of the society. In other words, good governance of the country depends upon the moral character and the standards of the people. According to Plato – “people get the government they deserve”. This implies that society as a whole expects certain standards of behaviour regarding fairness and propriety.³ Corruption thrives when there is no consensus on these standards. An important corrective mechanism then, is a common standard of morality. Moral standards in the society can be achieved by continuous education, particularly moral education through the family, schools, media, peer or social groups, political parties and so on. Through these efforts society can inculcate a willingness to sacrifice self-interest for the common welfare.

There is no doubt that corruption will disappear from the society if the people in different walks of public life keep society above their own narrow self and carry out their duties honestly and with a missionary zeal.

Thus it is quite essential to give a value-based education to the children in primary schools, high schools and higher education institutions. The schools and higher education institutions must reform their curriculum at all levels. In each district there must be a

³ Sangita, S.N.; ‘Corruption in administration : Causes and consequences’; in Narayanswamy, N., Boraian, M.P., Jeyaraju, M.F.; *Corruption at the grassroots: The shades and shadows*; (Ed.); Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi; 2000; pg-95.

center run by devoted and dedicated social workers to spread 'good values' among the people and create a mass movement to fight against corruption at all levels. During the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi started Ashrams to lead community life, setting an example to others and at the same time involving in rural reconstruction programmes. These Ashrams also gave orientation to the leaders to work for the masses. Today we do not have such centers. We need a handful of centers here to create this mass movement against corruption.

At the time of independence in 1947, the country inherited a power – oriented administrative system left by the British Raj. The government in present times is actually an instrument of their own creation through the constitution is not conceptually perceived by the people. Since they're overall attitude to the government has remained the same, as it was during the British Raj. It has become natural and easy for the elected representatives after independence to play a similar role as the British administrators did and make capital out of the system.⁴

It is said that increase in corruption is due to lack of special training and education. But empirical evidence reveals that there is no correlation between corruption and education, let alone one being

⁴ op. cit .; Ref 1; pg. 60.

the cause of the other. It is seen that most or all of the officers who are corrupt are generally well educated. According to Ralph Braibanti - "Literacy does not conduce necessarily to purity. Highly educated men are no more or no less virtuous than the untutored, as Cicero wrote centuries ago. More over, education in modern times has an imperfect function devoid of much moral content. The more secular a society becomes, the more this seems to be so. In any event, no modern government can wait for allegedly magical results of education to take effect. Certainly, education is one fact of a solution to the problem of corruption, but no more than that".⁵

The root of corruption is numerous. They are complex in nature. They are not exclusive or independent. They are rather interdependent. Locating the roots of corruption and studying the intricate relationship among the roots of corruption will help fight corruption more effectively.

Measures for tackling corruption may be broadly classified under three heads:

- (1) Preventive,
- (2) Punitive, and
- (3) Promotional.

⁵ Braibanti, Ralph; 'Reflections on bureaucratic corruption' ; Public Administration , London; pg. 359.

Preventive measures will include electoral reforms and administrative reforms, which would render the transaction of all government business more transparent and accountable to the people. Punitive measures will relate to laws, rules and the mechanism for effective investigation. Court trial, departmental disciplinary action and other means to deter the corrupt functionaries. Promotional measures will cover encouragement of value based politics, inculcation of moral and ethical principles among the younger generation in schools and colleges and the build up of a kind of society ostracisation of corrupt people by the society.⁶ Here I am concerned with the promotional measure to curb corruption.

For many years, there has been a lopsided emphasis on material progress and personal gain, and other worthwhile goals have suffered neglect. It is the social soil, and climate that will produce right or wrong tendencies and condition the outlook of the people, in relation to their own needs and problems and in the matter of dealing with others. It is only in a society, which attaches cardinal importance to ethical living and spiritual gains, that moral values acquire a hold on the minds of the people and norms of behaviour development. All the good, which lies in the human heart, can be activated so that

⁶ Halayya, M.; *Corruption in India*; 1985 ; Affiliated East West Press, Madras; pg.-251-252.

moral sanctions become a powerful force for right action. The awakened social conscience can express itself in many ways and give rise to social action in a variety of forms. This will be the bedrock for the growth and maintenance of higher moral and social standards and the spring of the moral force, which can prevent the breakdown of integrity in most cases.

It is essential to encourage the people's consumer movement at all levels from village to national levels – as watchdog against corrupt practices at different levels. We must also change the present lifestyle, which induces people to resort to all kinds of dubious means to earn more to satisfy their inordinate desires. Our educated population, those who are in power and those who are of the middle and upper middle class, set an example of luxurious lifestyle to the people in lower stratas. Public representation should so conduct themselves that they set an example of simple life. Spending lakhs of rupees on unnecessary things is quite common in public life today. For incurring these expenses our officials and others in different organisation are indulging in corrupt practices.

According to V.A.Vasudevaraju –

“Changes in ‘life-style’ also have paved the way for increase in corruption. Simple living and high thinking were the dominant values in the past. Virtue, culture and non-violence were the values in the

past. Now money power and muscle power have become dominant in public life. 'Consumerism' has nurtured the greed for money to lead a luxurious life. All these factors have individually and collectively contributed to the growth of corruption in contemporary society".⁷

Among the Islamic scholars, Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun should be specially mentioned. He is well known not only as the discourses of scientific history and sociology, but also as a student of corruption. Ibn Khaldun attempted to explain the causes of corruption, and also why at certain times reformers had failed, and at other times they had succeeded. His insight into the matter is interesting. He considered the root cause of it to be the passion for luxurious living within the ruling group. It was to meet the cost of luxurious living that the ruling resorted to corrupt dealings. The other causes were further effects generative of further corruption. They were the chain reaction released by corruption. The corruption of the ruling group brought about economic difficulties, and these difficulties in turn induced further corruption.⁸

Ends justify the means leaves leeway to corruption. Corruption has many faces , one uglier than other . Today the ethos of the

⁷ Vasudevraju, V. A.; in Narayanswamy, N., Boraian, M.P., Jeyaraju, M.F.; *Corruption at the grassroots: The shades and shadows*; (Ed.); Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi; 2000; pg-151.

⁸ op. cit.; Ref 2; pg.-5.

global market is sordid and shameful for those who believe in the codes of morality. To capture power at any level, social institutions, local bodies, political parties, government, political groups and bureaucrats indulge in bribes, pay off, kickbacks, etc unmindful of pulls and pressures on socio-economic and political arena of Indian.

The decadence of morals in the society is reflected in the government apparatus. Clearly this is so, because men in the government form a part of the society and are risen in the society. It is different matter that once they form part of the governmental apparatus they seem different. But as the men may cover difference towards the political life in the government, they imbibe from all that is happening in the society. Thus, if there is evidence of decaying ethical standards in the society, it is bound to be mirrored in the men who run the system.

Toleration of corruption is a very important reason why corrupt practices tend to grow. This is exactly what is happening in India. Up to a certain level we take corruption for granted. It follows that external vigilance is an essential precondition for the elimination of corruption. If corrupt ministers and officials can be haunted out by turning the spot light of public opinion on them, surely that will prove to be an effective deterrent to corrupt practices by others. (The dismissals of the government of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and Collor de Mello in Brazil are two prominent examples).

A common standard of morality is of utmost importance in any programme, which aims at eliminating corruption. The common complaint is that men at the helm of affairs are corrupt, and, therefore, these men can not even think of eliminating corruption. In addition, to this is the charge of double standards of ethics, which are being applied, to the few at the top and many at the bottom. It is clear, therefore, that the cleansing operation of corruption must start at the top. A common standard of morality for ministers and others at the top and to all others in the lower rungs of the administrative machinery needs to be evolved and applied with utmost efficiency.

What Ralph Braitanti ⁹ has to say in situations where values conflict, is worth quoting – “Corruption thrives in such conflict of values simply because there is no agreement as to what corruption is. It is significant to note that in culturally homogeneous societies in which there is consensus of values which are well established and widely diffused (such as small compact states like England and the Scandinavian countries), corruption is minimal. Before a society can fudge behaviour by saying ‘it isn’t cricket’, everyone must know the rule of cricket, must believe in them and accept them as inviolable”. In India, we do not have a common code of ethics applicable to one and all, high or low, while there is a plethora of rules and regulations applicable to public servants, there is no such code of conduct to

⁹ op.cit. ; Ref 5; pg.-366.

govern the activities of ministers and legislators. Therefore, the committee on prevention of corruption suggested that – “A code of conduct for ministers including provisions suggested by us for public servants relating to acquisition of property, acceptance of gifts and disclosure of assets and liabilities should be drawn up and the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers should consider themselves responsible for enforcing the code of conduct”. As regards legislators, the committee made the following suggestions: “It is desirable that a code of conduct for legislators embodying these and other principles should be framed by a special committee of representatives of Parliament and legislatures, nominated by speaker and chairman. The code should be formally approved by resolutions of Parliament and legislatures and any infringement of the code should be treated as a breach of privilege to be inquired into by the committee of privileges, and if a breach is established, action including termination may be taken. Necessary sanctions for enforcing the code should also be brought into existence”. These two recommendations taken together can purify public life in India to a great extent, if implemented in all seriousness.¹⁰

In the bureaucracy, careful, rigid training in rules and procedures can help this situation, indoctrination of a careful code of

¹⁰ op. cit ; Ref 6; pg. 115.

ethics subscribed to and understood by all levels of officials. No training in administration can be of value until there is near perfect understanding of bureaucratic norms evenly diffused in the total bureaucracy.

C. I. Lewis, a philosopher, has written that in the entire world and in all of life there is nothing more important to determine than what is right. And ethics is the study of those standards on the basis of which a particular action is judged to be right or wrong, moral or immoral, good or bad. The term 'moral' and 'ethics' are closely related. The word moral comes from the Latin word 'mores' and ethics from the Greek term 'ethos'. Both of these terms mean 'the custom or the accepted ways of behaviour'. These terms are sometimes used as if they are synonymous, but usually moral and morality refer to the conduct itself, while ethics and ethical refer to the study of moral conduct or the system or code that is followed.¹¹

An action can be called right or good in the moral sense if it has positive value for the person or persons. A good action is that which is 'person affirming' and wrongs which is 'person denying degrading'. In other words an action is right if it leads to physical, intellectual and spiritual development or which leads to a harmonious personal and social life. And an action is wrong if its effect is determined to the

¹¹ Khanna, Raj; 'Ethical standards in politics and administration' in Bhatnagar, S. and Sharma, S.L.; *corruption in Indian politics and bureaucracy*; 1991; Ess – Ess Pub., New Delhi; pg. 1.

individual and society. In other words, certain actions and ways of living which are detrimental or harmful to the larger community or society as a whole are called wrong actions. And the actions which are beneficial to the individual as well as society, receives group approval are called right. Morality is observance of the laws of wholesome living. And when the choice is between the two positive values, the right decision is the selection of the greater of the greatest value.

A distinction is been made between individual or private morality. Private morality pertains to the citizen in so far as they are private individuals and public morality pertains to community life in so far as they are the members of civil society. Machiavelli and Kautilya took the view that there is a difference between private and public morality. While Mahatma Gandhi was of the view that there is no difference. Similarly, Jayprakash Narayan stressed on the idea that the good society can never be realised except by strict adherence to certain human values and standards of conduct. Rajendra Prasad also expressed the view that whatever is harmful or prohibited for an individual is equally so for the nation and society. Nehru with some reservations also stressed this issue.

Moral crisis is written large on every facet of Indian life. Everyone seeks consolidation in the others – accusing fingers towards either – for all maladies of the system. In the accusation process, one

or the other accusing finger is pointed towards everyone without an exception. The deduct of morals, ethics, values, principles and virtues goes on unlashd alongside a bashful demonstration of total absence of all these attributes of an ideal society.

What is needed is a reawakening and recommitment to the basic values of traditions rooted in ancient and eternal wisdom that matters. The need is to know and practice the very purpose of human existence: the virtue of respect, honesty, truth, non-violence, fairness, responsibility, compassion, gratitude, friendship, brotherhood, maturity, faith, wisdom, contentment and the very purpose of life from cradle to grave.

Our tragedies all these years have been that India has copied west blindly, without applying its own mind instead of reviving our best tradition.

Consumption has become a central pillar of life in industrial lands, and is embedded in social values. The affluent life-style born in the United States is emulated by those who can afford it around the world. And many cans the average person today is four and halftime riches than were his or her great grandparents at the turn of the century.

India's economy should have been the care and culture of its people – Swadeshi; instead it has been dehumanised by reckless consumerism of the rich, corrupt and degrading passiveness of the

poor. Corruption has entered into the very marrow of its bones and scams and scandals are multiplying.

The root of corruption and corrupt practices, dishonesty and unfair deals, deception and deceit, crime and criminality are embedded in the basest instinct of human beings. Such as lust for power, privileges and perquisites. Consumerism sales drives and an acquisitive capitalist society in which the cleansing moral authority is replaced by the dictatorship of money. To face this challenge, a radical change is needed towards our attitude to business, commercial and political economy.

Since corruption stems from the individuals the only solution of improvement lies with the individual himself – no doubt within the wider parameters of society. Improvement of individual is certainly a gigantic task – a task almost impossible for state to undertake – needless to say, it must be done at the basic level, i.e. – family, school, etc. because in the end what is going to matter is what we imbibe as we grow and what we inculcate in others, perhaps our progeny, as we grow towards the pinnacle of our lives.

Contentment of course means satisfaction, agreement, being contented with what one has and being satisfied with it. If one does not gain his object in spite of effort, or succeeds to a very small extent only, and yet remain calm and does not feel troubled in his mind, he is said to have contentment.

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