

**ECONOMICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE**

**CORRUPTION IN POLITY**

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## CORRUPTION IN POLITY

It is now generally recognized that, in course of time, the governments in most countries of the world have entered into many new domains of activity and have taken upon themselves, either because of necessity or by their own choosing, newer and greater responsibilities. As a consequence of this, a fact that has become exceedingly important is that the governments have been acquiring more and wider powers to regulate the life and behavior of individuals and the functions of private institutions in more and newer areas of activity.

Today, the situation is such that, even before a baby is aware of its parents and surroundings, the government has registered its birth and has made regulations or laws for its life, and, even after the death of the person, there are laws, concerning his wealth, property, etc. which become immediately operative and in the period between birth and death, the government has been exercising great influence on him by requiring him to

do certain things under the compulsion of law or to suffer penalty or punishment for the infraction of its regulations.

Thus, while social, political, economic, cultural and religious institutions, in a country, affect in general, a man's outlook and character, the state also, with its power of reward and punishment and, through its wide-ranging laws, profoundly influence man's conduct, directly or indirectly. For example, a government, by vesting great powers of discretion and assessment in its officials, may indirectly be directing its citizens to a path of dishonesty and tax-evasion by showing lower income. Such being the case with many functions of the Government, particularly those which are 'action-laden', it can be understood how important it is to see and to make effort that the conduct of government functionaries also is in keeping with the demand of a fairly good moral standard.

**Pressures and Temptations are Sure to Corrupt Functionaries  
if there is no 'Strong Moral Fibre'**

It should not be forgotten, in this context, that the pressure upon Chief Executive or other government-functionaries, particularly those who take decisions that affect business, property, income, etc. of individuals and institution, is indeed very great. They are tempted by many so that they may lower their moral standard in order to engage in corrupt practices. The government functionaries too, are like other human beings and are, therefore, susceptible to temptations and may, therefore, abuse their power of discretion or assessment or decision to favour a person or an institution for deriving private profit instead of using these powers for public welfare and for common good.

There are, thus, chances of grave misuse of powers of discretion or other powers in certain areas of governmental-activities, as for example, in constructing extensive or expensive public works, granting direct or indirect subsidies, levying taxes, such as income tax, house tax, sales tax, wealth tax, etc., making loans under certain schemes, allotting land, auctioning certain precious goods, issuing licences and permits for certain items which are in short supply, spending vast sums for military supplies and equipments,

relaxing rules for certain low-income groups, or granting quota and rights to certain manufacturers or users, etc., etc.

Thus, if persons in power are not men of strong and unbending character, their integrity would be undermined by offering them gifts, remunerative employment after retirement, part of the benefit that would accrue as a result of their special favour, giving them an indirect share in business, etc. etc.

Hence there is dire necessity of giving moral education to government functionaries, for, in the absence of such an education, the functionaries would not be able to resist the temptations or escape the traps to corrupt practices for long, and their corruption would not only affect seriously the moral standard of themselves or their children but would send the shock-waves through the spine of the whole body politic down to the base.

**Legislators are Under Obligation and Constant Pressure and,  
therefore, Require Strengthening of Morals**

Now let us consider the case of legislators. For fighting elections, campaign-funds and workers have to be secured. Particularly in these days, when costs of every item have considerably gone up, elections require enormous funds. But donors, particularly those, who give large sums, demand some favours in return for their monetary assistance. The favours demanded may be for contracts, quotas, licences, subsidies, special legislation, etc. Those who help as workers, publicity agents, etc. also demand certain benefits.

This against, from times to time, they ask the legislators to help their friends and relatives by using their influence and power. The pressure to get favours has taken the form of asking the legislators to help release even anti-social elements from the grip of police, prosecution or penalties. Besides the donors and the party workers, influential voters also demand certain undue favours from ministers and legislators. There are pressures also from party-offices and party leaders in the government so that a legislator's moral stamina is under great strain.

So, if there is no proper provision and arrangement for moral education in the country, the country would surely get bogged down into the morass of moral turbidity or get caught up in the whirl or vicious circle of corruption at all levels of society. It should be noted that the tendency to separate politics from ethical consideration is already great, and, if it is not eliminated, reduced or contained, it will have far-reaching and unfortunate consequences and will create an atmosphere of peacelessness,

One should not hesitate to accept this bitter truth that those who stand for election to legislatures are not universally recognized saints or acclaimed renunciates; most of them are men of average or mediocre moral stature and are subject to sway of emotions and have desire for more power and to win praise and to reap, sooner or later, the fruits of their long period of work in the political field.

Moreover, the democratic form of government, by its very nature, is slow in actions and this gives to the people a chance to seek quick favours through 'inner rings', 'close circles' or 'coterie' of people who are close to centers of power. Which otherwise assumed the significance of "Toll Plaza" for easy passages in the Administration.

And, this also is nonetheless true that the lower nature of man, though he be in private business or in political party, urges him to take maximum benefit of situations even if his morals would dip down in the bid to capture power or to gain monetary benefits. It is, therefore, necessary that such people who hold positions of responsibility and power to go to places or attend certain programmes which exert moral influence on them and refresh and strengthen their moral being.

### **Conduct of Government Functionaries is of Special Importance and Needs Moral Influence**

This act needs to be given special cognizance that if law-makers become law-breakers, then there can be no full stop. If those, who are expected to set high standards of public conduct and to lead the nation, indulge into corrupt practices; then no one remains to cry a halt to the process of moral degeneration. If those who have been given the authority to rule and to legislate for public welfare and for social good, observe no moral norms, then the society is destined to end in lawlessness and anarchy,

for the common man will follow his lead and have the least care for the social good or for high standard of professional and personal life.

So, in the spirit of the saying: ' As the king so are his subjects', persons in seats of power, or holding keys of Management, or steering legislative measures, must have a character of rustless and stainless steel. They also must have a special code of conduct to follow because their profession has special powers, or position, or responsibilities, and repercussions of their misconduct are more serious, more wide-ranging, and influence large masses and setting wrong trends in public and private morality.

If they have no code of conduct to follow and if they are not given some course in moral guidance, they will destroy the moral structure of society and will make the social life infested with unethical practices at all levels. No one at the lowest rung or the highest pedestal have any one left to check his mind from infraction of moral norms or legal restrictions.

It is, therefore, utmost essential that government-functionaries, particularly those who deal directly with the public and are open to

influence, pressures, graft, etc., be given classes to keep their moral armour in shape and to give their conscience extra succour so that they can withstand pressures and temptations and can thus serve the nation in an unblemished and better way, keeping their heads and spirits happy, their conduct above-board and their character upright.

### **Measures to Strengthen Moral Base**

This can be done in a number of ways. One of these can be to invite persons of esteemed moral stature and high character to deliver some well-reasoned and inspiring lectures. Let this be started even at a small scale and even as an experimental measure. If this brings about change even in five percent government functionaries, it will save the national exchequer crores of rupees and the people from a great ordeal and will influence the overall moral atmosphere in the country so that new and higher trends in public morality will set in. In fact this will create national spirit, emotional integration, dedication to duty, sense of service and the motto of public good in the minds of government servants.

In all seriousness, the government should make arrangements and, in consultation with some persons of moral stature, make a programme for moral education of those, to start with, whose nature of work keeps them constantly exposed to pressures and temptations. This should include government functionaries from a cross-section of all departments.