International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Eradicating Corruption in India: A Roadmap for Transparency and Accountability in the Administration

Kalipadha Debnath

Research Scholar, Arts (Political Science), Mangalayatan University, Aligarh, U.P, India

ABSTRACT:

India's economic efforts, governance and people's faith in government institutions are affected by ongoing corruption. Even with many laws and anti-corruption groups, it remains a difficult problem for society. This research paper examines the main causes of corruption, investigates current approaches to fighting it and suggests strategies based on transparency, accountability and improvements in governance for eradicating corruption. Among the types of corruption experienced in India are bribery, embezzlement, nepotism and problems related to how government offices operate. Inadequate enforcement and political influences are weakening work to deal with this issue. Although RTI, Lokpal and Lokayuktas and digital tools have been helpful, corruption is still common in several parts of our society. The research explores how digital approaches, e-government platforms and technologies such as blockchain and AI help combat corruption. The report also emphasizes the role of citizens taking part, whistleblowers being protected and communities using monitoring to achieve transparency. Understanding corruption better, making anti-corruption laws stronger and empowering related agencies are necessary for success over the years. According to the report, the country can avoid corruption by adopting measures such as legal changes, better political control and recent technologies. If the country builds trust and transparency among its institutions, India can achieve efficient and sustainable growth.

Keywords: orruption, governance, transparency, accountability, measures against corruption and digital governance.

1.Introduction:

Corruption severely impedes India's development and influences public administration, laws on economy and justice. It may show up as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism or misusing government funds. Though India introduced laws like the Prevention of Corruption Act in 1988 and Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act in 2013, it is difficult to implement these laws effectively. This paper looks at the current level of corruption in India and discusses ways to achieve greater transparency and accountability.

2. Objectives:

The goal of this study is

i. Find out the main reasons behind corruption in India.

ii. Check the efficiency of current laws and authorities designed to fight corruption.

iii. Find out how digital governance minimizes the risk of corruption.

iv. Offer ways to improve openness and accountability in how governance is carried out.

v. Review how people get involved to help overcome corruption.

3. Methodology:

Research methods are mixed to analyze strategies against corruption in India. To learn about people's views on corruption and how well various anti-corruption steps work, surveys and interviews will be used with government officials, legal experts and residents. The research will also include secondary information collected from reports and court cases on how countries around the world have dealt with corruption. I will perform a comparison of the policies in use to identify best ways of doing things. Economic data will be analyzed statistically, while human stories related to corruption will be grouped by similar themes. Findings will be used to offer suggestions that improve laws, increase people's involvement and make use of technology for

openness. Maintaining confidentiality and impartiality is a main focus in the study. The researchers hope to achieve a clear roadmap for transparent and accountable governance by blending data with analysis of policies.

4. Interpreting and understanding the data is the main part of data analysis.

4.1. Causes of Corruption in India:

4.1.1. Bureaucratic Inefficiency:

 Bureaucratic problems are a main reason for corruption in India. Many red tape rules and complicated processes make it easier for people to pay bribes and boost favours. Almost always, government processes include several layers of approval, allowing officials to force people seeking quick approval to pay illegal money for quick service. Applying for a business license, getting a passport or making use of government benefits usually means coming up against long and complicated procedures that lead them to pay bribes. Slow development and weakening public trust in government institutions are common effects of badly organized bureaucracy.

4.1.2. Enforcing the law is not very thorough:

Although having strong laws helps stop corrupt behavior, in India law enforcement rarely catches those involved in corruption. While anti-corruption organizations work well on paper, the system as a whole is too flawed for their work to be effective. Lots of dishonest high-ranking individuals remain unaccountable due to problems with investigations, poor cooperation among the agencies involved and outside interference in court cases. A system where punishments are minor and it takes ages to resolve cases does not scare anyone which results in increased corruption.

4.1.3. Political Influence:

 Political Influence India suffers from a lot of political corrupt practices. Running an election is expensive and many politicians get the money they need from shady donations by businesses and crime figures. For this reason, donors request benefits such as contracts, alterations in policy or avoiding legal consequences. When political financing is not clear, vote-buying, lobbying and crony capitalism often take place unchecked. In addition, political representatives may use their posts to get rich, twist the activities of law enforcement and conceal their allies' misconduct. Thanks to this cycle, democratic systems fall even weaker and people begin to lose confidence in those in charge.

4.1.4. Judicial Delays Judges:

Judicial Delays Judges help bring corrupt people to justice, but it sometimes takes too long for them to make a final decision. Court congestion in India makes it difficult to deliver justice in a timely way. Corrupt officials deliberately use those delays in the system to avoid being held responsible. If long-lasting cases cause victims to lose their belief in justice, it makes it more likely that corruption will increase in the whole community.

4.1.5. A common lack of public knowledge and concern about possible problems:

India has a problem where few people want to complain about corruption because of fear or not knowing their rights. People who expose wrongdoing often have to deal with threats, harassment or even violence. Laws like the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, from 2014, do not really improve the level of protection available. In addition, many rural residents are unfamiliar with the procedures for reporting corruption or seeking assistance for their grievance. Such lack of care for consequences keeps people quiet which helps corrupt activities continue unopposed.

4.2. Reviewing Anti-Corruption Laws Currently in India:

The government of India has introduced laws and instituted organizations to deal with corruption, although their achievements are often argued about. Even though they made certain practices clearer, they still have many important issues.

4.2.1. Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988:

This Act has been named the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Corruption involving public officials is mainly covered by the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), 1988. It covers crimes such as bribery, siphoning public money and deceiving others to help themselves. Although the law is thorough, the enforcement of it is weak because investigations are slow and not effective. Many government officials who are corrupt escape being punished, mostly because investigations can take a long time, little solid proof is found and authorization to prosecute higher officials is usually needed. Although amendments made in 2018 tried to add tougher measures by holding bribe givers liable and speeding up case investigations, current policies are not always followed.

4.2.2. Lokpal and Lokayuktas:

Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act which passed in 2013 Because citizens asked for a strong system to watch over corruption, the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act was enacted in 2013. According to the law, the Lokpal is set up at the federal level and Lokayuktas are required at every state level to probe corruption involving public officials like the Prime Minister. Indeed, its influence has not reached its full potential because of regular appointment delays, limited authority and political intrusion. Because the prosecution mechanism is missing, has made it harder for the court to be effective. A number of states are without Lokayuktas which means the law does not fully reach people on the ground.

4.2.3. Central Vigilance Commission:

Ensuring corruption in government departments is overseen by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) which also gives advice on disciplinary actions. Although vigilance administration depends on it, it is not authorized to independently prosecute corruption and so is not able to directly act against corrupt officials. The CBI is used by the CVC for investigations, but these investigations may be affected by outside pressure. Also, because it is just an advisory service, government departments may not need to follow Committee recommendations.

4.2.4. The Right to Information Act, 2005:

The RTI Act, that was established in 2005, gives people the authority to ask government agencies for information, making the government's actions more open. It has been very helpful in demonstrating where and why corruption and inefficiency occur. But, dealing with administration excuses, breaking the rules and harassing those who complain have hurt its effectiveness. Recent amendments to the law have weakened the independence of the Information Commissions, so the law is now less able to hold officials accountable.

4.3. Role of Digital Governance:

Technology is now used to help battle corruption by lessening the influence of humans, increasing transparency and insisting on accountability. Technology helps governments and financial organizations stop many corrupt activities by making processes digital, using fewer middlemen and making sure data is secure.

4.3.1. E-Governance Platforms:

E-Governance, delivering public services has become simpler, more straightforward and available to more citizens. Eliminating intermediaries thanks to GeM and DBT has successfully reduced corruption.

• By using GeM, the government receives goods and services using open and competitive procedures. Government departments connecting buy with verified suppliers on GeM eliminates most chance of special treatment, much higher bills and dishonest deals.

• DBT means that welfare benefits are sent right into the accounts of those who qualify which cuts down on corruption and prevents fake lists of recipients. The payment process through Aadhaar illustrates and Aadhaar ensures only the right people receives the funds. As a result of digital technology, corruption in public procurement and welfare distribution is now much lower, so resources are given to the right people without any influence.

4.3.2. Blockchain Technology:

With blockchain, the information in financial transactions is maintained transparently and cannot be easily changed. Since blockchain can make sure transactions are unchangeable, it helps bring down fraud and corruption. Blockchain helps governments see real-time movements of public funds, avoiding the misuse of finances and matching spending with its purpose. There is a high level of corruption in how land and property are registered. With the use of blockchain, we can store a safe property ownership log, stopping illegal land sales and making sure the proper owners are in charge. Adding predefined rules to contracts means Smart Contracts carry out the purchase and financial terms without the chance of alteration. Because it prevents the manipulation of data, blockchain encourages trust and accountability in the leadership of governments.

4.3.3. Artificial Intelligence being used for Fraud Detection

Through the AI and machine learning, it is easier to spot signs of fraudulent activities in big data sets. With AI, it is possible to analyze patterns in spending and catch suspicious actions before they get worse. Identity fraud in public service distribution can be prevented using AI Face and Biometric Verification. Automated audits with AI help accomplish reviews more effectively, cut down on bias and uncover issues that are sometimes missed by people.

4.4. Citizen Participation

4.4.1. How Citizens Work Against Corruption:

A society grows more corrupt when people do not know what their rights are, have a fear of speaking up or do not trust the institutions meant to serve them. A society that is involved in politics allows the public to control government and help cut down on corruption. Stronger whistleblower laws, more awareness educational programs and better community watchdog actions are major ways to improve the struggle against corruption.

4.4.2. Whistleblower Protection:

By exposing corruption and wrongdoing within government and firms, whistleblowers help make business practises fairer. Yet, a lot of individuals find it difficult to file complaints against corruption because they worry about criminal acts against them, being bullied at work or suffering harm.

• **Whistleblowers Are Still at Risk**: Laws preventing retaliation against whistleblowers are common, but they regularly go unenforced. Securing these laws with anonymity, legal immunity and safety for whistleblowers is necessary to persuade more individuals to speak up.

• **Establishing Reporting Tools for Within the Organisation and Externally**: The government should provide people with ways to report such as hotlines, websites and third-party offices. Private organisations and companies ought to set up systems within their policies to help staff who raise concerns about wrongdoing. Many countries give financial incentives or help ensure whistleblowers are protected from persecution. Not having strong policies in place means a lot of potential whistleblowers stay silent, allowing unwanted practises to continue.

4.4.3. Programmes about community involvement:

Having an informed public is the main way to protect against corruption. Telling the public about their rights, legal rules and how corruption works leads them to hold those in power accountable.

• **Curriculum in Educational Institutions:** It is important for lessons on ethics, good government and anti-corruption laws to be introduced into the curriculum in schools and universities.

• **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can use social media, television, and community outreach programs to educate citizens on how to identify and report corruption.

• **Workshops and Courses:** Training journalists, society activists and community leaders on a regular basis gives them what they need to investigate corruption successfully. Informed citizens are more willing to stop wrongdoing and require clearer information.

4.4.4. Community-Based Monitoring: -

Having citizens watch the government and monitor its spending contributes to file establishment and discourages corruption in the community.

• People can join in on social audits to cheque how public projects such as road building, school financing and welfare schemes are using their funds. Citizens should have a say in how public funds are used and where which inhibits dishonest actions.

• User-initiated Watchdog Committees: Creation of these committees makes it easier for communities to expose corruption within local offices. 5. Suggestions Steps for Improving Efforts to Fight Corruption Looking at corruption laws, technology and citizens' involvement gives us ideas for actions to make governance more open, responsible and effective. They concentrate on rules, institutions, technology, leadership standards and getting people involved to achieve an anti-corruption society.

5. Suggestions

Suggestions for Strengthening Anti-Corruption Measures

Based on the evaluation of corruption laws and the role of technology and citizen participation, several measures can be implemented to enhance transparency, accountability, and governance efficiency. These measures focus on **legal reforms, institutional strengthening, technological advancements, ethical leadership, and public engagement** to create a corruption-free society.

5.1. Reform Legal Policies

A main reason corruption continues is that the courts take a long time and punishments are not tough enough. In order to remedy this:

• Setting up anti-corruption Fast-Track Courts lets proceedings move quickly and offers quick justice. A lengthy court process for corruption cases lets the person in question change or hide the facts.

• Harsher Penalties: Making fines larger, increasing length of prison terms and not allowing anyone convicted of corruption to hold public office in the future is a powerful method to discourage corruption.

• Making sure laws protect anyone who blows the whistle on corruption, ensures confidentiality, offers legal benefits and can result in money rewards for the whistleblower.

5.2. Helping Anti-Corruption:

Agencies Become Powerful Institutions like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) play a crucial role in tackling corruption, but their effectiveness is often undermined by political interference. To improve these organisations: Giving autonomy means empowering anti-corruption agencies to work alone without being guided by politicians or bureaucrats. Additional authority in wiretapping, tracking assets and analysing data can empower agencies to find corruption more easily.

• Inter-Agency Coordination: Improving coordination between agencies like the CBI, CVC, Lokpal, and Enforcement Directorate (ED) to create a unified anti-corruption framework.

5.3. Enhancing Transparency:

Open government practices stop corruption by making sure taxpayer wealth is managed properly. Some steps to bring transparency are: The compulsory disclosure of political financing is important to philtre out any dishonest money and staunch the influence of corporations. Elected officials and main bureaucrats should be made to declare their property yearly to avoid corruption. Governments should share data on how finances are managed, what is purchased and how much has been spent so that the public and independent experts can cheque the information.

5.4. Supporting Ethical Leadership:

Unethical political leadership frequently is the source of corruption. Supporting integrity in top positions can influence the way governance is accomplished. Steps include:

• Groups within political parties should establish separate ethics boards to keep an eye on party members' actions. Public officials which are ministers, legislators and bureaucrats, should strictly follow an ethical code, under penalty for any wrongdoing. Education on ethics and essential values should regularly be given to elected officials and other branches of the government.

5.5. Expanding E-Governance:

By using technology, delivering services can be made more direct which greatly reduces the opportunities for corruption. Steps to improve e-governance are:

• Nationwide Digital Platforms for Government Transactions: Expanding the use of GeM (Government e-marketplace) and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) across all public sectors to prevent fund leakages. Land records, procurement and finance can now be digitalized on the blockchain, reducing the chance of tampering and fraud.

• With AI and big data, banking companies can now identify corruption and warn about suspicious activities.

5.6. Public Engagement:

Anti-corruption work can only succeed if people are knowledgeable and involved. Involving members of the public can be initiated in a number of ways:
• Improving NGOs and Civil Society Organisations: Helping groups that reveal corruption by offering them appropriate legal and financial help. A free press that is not under anyone's control should never be stopped from investigating possible corruption cases. Educate people through programmes, workshops and online campaigns about their rights concerning fighting corruption.

6. Limitations:

Even though the study analyses many aspects, it has some limitations.

• The research centres on government corruption and does not examine private sector corruption in much detail.

• Problems with Data: Gathering useful information on corruption is hard as reports are rarely completed fully.

• Applying the Plans: The suggested actions need strong government commitment and administrative skill.

7. Conclusion:

For India to be free of corruption, a robust, ongoing effort should use laws, technology, fair politics and active involvement by the public. Even though both the Prevention of Corruption Act and two institutions called Lokpal and CVC exist, their outcome largely depends on how strictly they are enforced and how politically independent they remain. Utilising e-governance, blockchain and AI-powered fraud detection makes processes in government more transparent and reduces the role of people in them. Nevertheless, legal and technological steps are not enough. Encouraging integrity requires ethical leaders, involvement of the public and good laws to protect whistleblowers. Everyone can fight corruption by supporting activities by civil society groups, NGOs and the media. As there are still difficulties, advancing transparency measures and promoting a sincere commitment from politicians can lead to a fair, just and corrupt-free community. Achieving this goal depends greatly on what the government, courts, businesses and citizens do.

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