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## CORRUPTION: A PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUE

Niranjan Prasad Upadhyay\*

### Introduction

The word corruption is very universal. Today social researchers are indulging to deal corruption in their own ways. Especially, psychologists argue that nice and clean man may change his or her behaviour on the basis of social and family pressures and circumstances. American psychologist, David G. Myers (1994) has stressed in his book entitled "Exploring social psychology" that nice people also become corrupted through excessive social pressures. Basically, in developing countries like Nepal, the people are always trying to accumulate money and want to be rich persons by different means. In day –to day practice, family members begin to put pressure on the nice and clean service man to get money by any means. Actually, such types of daily pressures of the family may disturb the mental balance of government and non-governmental personnel. In fact, in every aspect of life the man is negatively imitating others behaviors in different way of actions like marriage ceremony, thread wearing ceremony, birthday, construction of huge buildings, purchasing lands, cars, diamonds, gold etc.

Corruption is an antisocial activity, which is learnt through nastiest parenting. Effective parenting by implication,

\* Chief Psychologist (Joint Secretary) Public Service Commission

aims at primarily the best type family climate for a congenial socialization of the individual, as well as, a healthy development of his or her personality and self. Every one's personality is the creation of his or her family. Family provides a frame – work within which human being may find roots, continuity and sense of belonging. Parents serve as the first socializing agents. Especially, sound family environment always persists disciplines, moral and obedience lessons. Mainly, such diversified effective lessons impart good manner, corruption free mind, and acquired integrated personality. At the same time, it is essential to say that psychosocial approach is purely interlinked with social behavioral phenomena and which is product of society. So, in this article I have managed to deal various disciplines pertaining to corruption. Basically, man is influenced by various factors and those factors disturb his entire personality. Consequently, he or she may be diverted towards wrong path.

Corruption is a major obstacle to development .It undermines democracy and destroys the credibility of government. Effective democracy requires a comprehensive attack on corruption as a factor of social disintegration and distortion of the economic system that undermines the legitimacy of political institutions. Transparency International has done exceptionally remarkable work in creating worldwide awareness about the dangerous implication of the growing menace of corruption, especially for billions of people living in developing countries.

Corruption in Nepal is so rampant that in spite of many efforts to reduce it, it exists at all levels of public bureaucracy. This is really a great challenge to the campaign of national development (Administrative Reform Commission's Report, 1975-76). Basically, right from the inception of Rana rule in Nepal, public servants had become bold enough to collect and save the money any how for the personal use of the Ranas, their immediate bosses and themselves. The proverb “ one who takes honey out of the beehive, licks his hand” also became popular and it boosted up their courage to gain some personal privilege from their respective positions in civil service (Poudyal, 1984). This psychological encouragement was also supported by the

fact that the large amount of such undue goods and services used to go directly to their respective masters. Because of all these reasons, the noble sermon (or the Dinya Upadesh) of Prithibi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal, was undermined and violated right from that period, though the words of the sermon regarded both the bribe –receiver and bribe – offerer as enemy of the nation. Now they are thrown into the dustbin of history leaving a legacy of protected type of corruption and institutionalization of all sorts of malpractices. As a result, social status remained only on the money and power irrespective of its source. People with black money gained power and emerged as elites of the nation. This situation also gave a positive chance for the emergence of wing of contractors and sub –contractors within the institutionalized pattern of corruption in Nepal.

Studies have shown that a very open economy is significantly associated with lower corruption. An economist, Paolo Mauro (1997) introduces a research article on “Why worry about corruption?” in the Economic issues Series. In that article he stresses that when civil service pay is too low, civil servants may be obliged to use their positions to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet.

HMG has initiated important steps towards good governance and corruption control in this fiscal year. The government is committed to prepare a Comprehensive Anti Corruption Strategy and its implementation for corruption control in the next fiscal year. The strategy regarding the corruption eradication had to be prepared and implemented by mid-October 2002 (Public Statement on Income and Expenditure on the Fiscal year 2002-2003, His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Finance, Bagdarbar, Kathmandu, Nepal).

Recently, (2002 year) Upadhya introduces an article on “A fight for corruption control in Nepal” in the Journal of the Nepal Administrative Staff College. In that article he remarks that in the case of Nepal although people may have the temptation to flout the law for their political gain, if the law is implemented rather sternly it may be difficult in the initial period but in the long run that gets settled and the politics gets its own course of action. Furthermore, there is necessary to make a law



that requires a person to declare the legal source of the wealth acquired by him. Such strategy will greatly contribute to the fight for controlling corruption. In this subject, Chief Commissioner presents following figure, which shows the involvement and relationship of diversified agencies pertaining to corruption control.



Figure 1. Relationship of Ministries, departments and semi-government agencies in corruption control (Adapted from Upadhyay, S.N., A fight for corruption control in Nepal, Administration and Management Review, Volume 14, No.1, 2002, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur Nepal).

Ghimire, H. (2001) has recently introduced an article on Pro-poor governance as good governance in Kathmandu Post. He states that the government is, of course not bad in everything.

But, it is suffering from a bad image among the public. A recent survey of NGO postulates that people see corruption thriving under political protection. As high as 84 percent of the survey respondents were pessimistic about the possibility of corruption control. They do not even file a complaint against corrupt behaviour, as no remedy would be available.

Particularly, poor societies with heavy state intervention and regulations and regulations create numerous monopoly rents with discretionary powers bestowed on government officials. Some economists have come up with a simple equation placing corruption, C, as a function of monopoly (M), discretion (D) and accountability (A):  $C = M + D - A$ . This demonstrates clearly how corruption exists in an environment where a state organization has monopoly power over the distribution of goods, discretion to decide who receives them and is not accountable for its actions (Wagle, 1998).

Nepalese administration is characterized by different kinds of pathological traits such as the pathology of persistence, pathology of conservatism, pathology of growth, pathology of status, pathology of self-service, pathology of buck-passing, pathology of delay, pathology of nepotism and favoritism and pathology of corruption. The existence of these bureau-pathologies have been recognized the major reasons that impede public bureaucracy on its developmental role. Poudyal, (1986) stresses that corrupt environment of the country has been one of the major reasons for the existence of the pathology of corruption. Pervasiveness of corruption in Nepalese society has not left any circle untouched from below to top levels. It is moreover institutionalized and has been accepted as mode of life. At the same time people within the country do not bother about the source and nature of income, they worship money and all are behind it. Because of this corrupt environment, developmental undertakings of the country are facing lot of problems and the bureaucracy is caught within the corrupt circle.

Chiefly, to secure an efficient civil service, it is essential to protect it from political and personal influences. In countries where this principle has been neglected, and the spoils system has taken its place, an inefficient and disorganized civil service

has been the inevitable result and corruption has been out of control. It is a leading hindrance to progress. It deteriorates democracy and destroys the creditability of government. Effectual democracy requires an abundance attack on corruption as a factor of social disintegration and distortion of the economic system that undermines the legitimacy of political institutions. Recently the government of Nepal has formulated governance reforms policy. Some of such envisioned reforms are anti corruption measures, reform management and capacity building, improvement in the overall efficiency of the civil service, enhancing competence and motivation of civil servants and performance improvement in key ministries. In the new program of anti corruption, the government aims at strengthening the legal framework for combating corruption through the involvement of civil society.

### **Corruption Scenarios of Developed and Developing Countries**

Even the economic development of the country is severely handicapped by an inadequate, inefficient and ill maintained infrastructure whose functioning is hampered by indescribable malpractices (Sriwastava, 2001). Sriwastava further adds that correction process must therefore begin at the topmost political and administrative levels.

There is corruption in developed countries as well but, in relative terms, it is marginal and it does not affect the day-to-day life of the common people. In developing countries, corruption is pervasive and frustrates all efforts to provide relief to many millions of common people who, even today, are suffering from abysmal and degrading poverty. The International Herald Tribune (1999) states the relevant pictures of developing countries. Tribune further adds that among the 4.4 billion people in developing countries around the world, three-fifth live in communities lacking basic sanitation; one-third go without safe drinking water; one-quarter lack adequate housing, one-fifth are undernourished, and 1.3 billion live on less than \$ 1 a day.

In 1999 Transparency International carried out a Survey of as many as 99 countries spread over five continents. On the

basis of this survey, the 1999 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was published. At the top of this index table is Denmark, which has the distinction of being regarded as the most honest country in the world. At the bottom of the table is Cameroon that is assessed being the most corrupt country of the world.

The problem of governance presents itself in many forms both as a social pathology and as outcomes, creating anxiety in all responsible quarters about the future of the nation. Corruption driving strong of avarice and myopic quest for personal power knows no ideology, nor does it recognize any religion, language, ethnicity or constitutional system. It can be regulated, contained and controlled only by a sense of social responsibility (Pandey, D. R., 2001). Many social researchers have urged that anti-corruption laws and offices alone will not be able to cope with corruption. In the democratic environment "Corruption culture" is widely exercised in different forms of action and social behaviour. Psychologically, man is always imitating others pomp and show behaviours. Actually, such behaviors demand illegal way of thoughts and it disturbs mental balance of the individual. Consequently, the man drives toward illegal path. Especially, for controlling such types of behaviour the family members must follow the moral proverb "Cut your coat according to your cloth" and never insist to the elders for necessities and demands.

### **Public Servant and Corruption Practice**

Mere receipt of money by a public servant raises the presumption of illegal gratification, which in plain words is bribery and corruption. It is not necessary that such a payment should be definitely concerned to a particular case or contract or a positive or identifiable favour done. Personnel expert, Mahshukhani (1979) focuses that a public servant is expected to be a cautious man. He or she must conduct in a manner so as not to create traps or suspicious situations. In the context of corruption, The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1997) states that corruption, the act of promising, or agreeing to receive money or some other thing of value with the corrupt aim of influencing a

public official duty. When money has been offered or promised in exchange for a corrupt act, the official involved need not actually accomplish that act of the offense of bribery to be complete.

Personnel management expert has emphasized that a civil society must prevent itself from getting accustomed to poor governance. The major barriers to good governance are the bloated size of the career bureaucracy, lower productivity, poor accountability, transparency and integrity. It is said that governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanism, process and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. "Governance" is a continuum, and not necessarily unidirectional: it does not automatically improve over time. It is a plant that needs constant tending. Like democracy, governance remains particularly difficult to operate. Actually, Good governance possesses diversified features i.e. transparency, accountability, public sector management etc. Nepalese management researchers pinpoint that good governance without good bureaucracy will remain a myth.

Due to the rampant corruption in Nepal, the socio-economic and political system of the country is heavily deteriorated. Psychologically, government must impart awareness-building lessons to the general public as presenting the diversified pictures of developed and developing countries as referring their success in various disciplines. Also government must disseminate its policies regarding corruption and publish those events to the general people through different media. Transparency International Nepal stresses that a corrupt man cannot be a democrat, a leader and a parliamentarian. Accordingly, corrupted persons should be expelled and socially boycotted. Regmi, (2001) has introduced book entitled "Firing Corruption" in his book he has stressed about the prevailing irregularities or corruption in government offices. Primarily, to secure an efficient civil service, it is essential to protect it from political and personal influences.

### **Tactics of Controlling Corruption**

In Nepalese context, Transparency International Nepal is running various multidimensional programs and tactics pertaining to corruption control. In this course of actions, it combats in all forms at national and international levels through advocacy, civic pressure, professional interaction and awareness building. Some other objectives that regularly covers like discouraging abuse of public posts and authority for personal interests and motivating movements for an active role against corruption.

Yet the government undertook several measures that corrected the distortions in the economy and social structure. In the context of corruption, the daily English, Space Time Today has remarked that if Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) is indeed to play its designated role to popular expectations by really punishing the corrupt and guilty, some fundamental rethinking will have to be done. The CIAA has at its disposal to carry out its duties is inadequate to curb corruption. Corruption, lack of character, incompetence and abuse of authority have remained some of the glaring trademarks of too many of those in the country's public life. This has to be corrected. But, ambiguities surrounding some of the laws for dealing with such personages as well as the absence of an effective authority to check wrong doing at high places has, in fact resulted in widespread disillusionment with the country's democratic polity itself. Beyond this, the all pervasiveness of corruption has pre-empted the aspirations of the people to move forward to a better quality of life. The country has made too little progress in all fronts. Developments efforts have been moving at too slow a pace to meet the minimum expectations of the people. Anti corruption efforts have remained merely a convenient slogan, which people have come to view as not even amusing. All this obviously has to be straightened out. This will not be possible until every body, particularly the high and the mighty in public life, are made accountable to the laws of the land.

Despite frequent assertions of intent by political leaders, Nepal has yet to develop an effective anti-corruption agenda. All of these deficiencies, particularly the absence of effective institutional arrangements to enforce accountability, together with the incentives for short-lived governments to maximize personal gains as quickly



as possible have created a fertile environment for corruption. Although there is little statistical evidence to conclusively prove whether corruption in Nepal has increased or not, there are enough examples to indicate the frequency of its incidence and how widespread the problem is (Nepal Public Expenditure Review, Document of the World Bank, 2000).

### Conclusion

Psychologists advocate that good and dirt free man may modify his or her behaviour on the basis of community and family pressures and situations and consequently he or she may pursue the wrong path. Social scientists argue that such kind of people also get corrupted through unnecessary social pressures. In principal, the developing countries like Nepal, people always try to collect cash and want to be wealthy person by unusual way. Psychologically, family members initiate the nice and spotless man as compelling to obtain currency by any means. In fact, such types of day-by-day pressures of the family may upset the mental equilibrium of general man or government and non-governmental personnel.

Corruption is an unfriendly doings, which is learnt through worst parenting. Effective parenting by implication aims at primarily the best type family environment for a friendly socialization of the individual, as well as, a healthy growth of his or her personality. At the same time it is necessary to say that psychosocial approach is purely interlinked with social behavioral phenomena and it is the product of society. Primarily, man is influenced by diverse factors and these factors upset his entire personality.

Nepalese administration, is characterized by different kinds of pathological traits such as the pathology of persistence, pathology of conservatism, pathology of growth, pathology of status, pathology of self-service, pathology of buck-passing, pathology of delay, pathology of nepotism and favoritism and pathology of corruption. The existence of these bureau-pathologies have been recognized the major reasons that hamper public bureaucracy on its developmental role. Psychologically, government and non-governmental organizations must impart awareness-building programs pertaining to corruption control.

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