TECHNOLOGY AND E- GOVERNANCE: - EFFECTIVE TOOLS TO OVERCOME CORRUPTION

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ABSTRACT

As the noted remark by the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 that out of one rupee spent by the government for welfare of poor and downtrodden, only 15 paise thereof actually reaches to those persons for whom it is meant. Corruption is found everywhere in all over the world in many shapes or kinds and very difficult to escape from this mesh. Power on paper is the stamped recognition for collection of illegal gratification at public work places. The recent advancements in technology and e-governance is the more powerful and effective tool to get rid from the corruption and corruptive practices.

Keywords: Technology, e-Governance, Transparency

Introduction

The intensification of corruption in public offices is not anewspecies today. According to Transparency International Corruption perceptions Index 2022 India ranked 85/180 and scored 40/100[i]. Nepotism, corruption, hawala aberrations and scams whichcausing economic stagnation and increasing the poverty. These corruptive practices siphon off money from the poor for render public services. It also scares awaythe investors, developers and promoters in participation of economic development exposed in one side and the other part with use of technology by one-touchour Prime Minister Narendra Modi disbursed Rs 12,000 crore to six crore beneficiaries without the support from middlemen directly into their accounts.This paper aims to discuss the 1) perceptions of corruption and reasons for the growth of the corruption 2) Technological advancements and initiatives of E-governance are effective tools for root out the corruption and corruptive practices form the public offices and 3) supportive argumentsof adopting E-governance in public offices and use of ICT to fight against corruption.

I.   What is Corruption?

The word Corruption derived from the Latin word "*Corruptus*", means "to break". The World Bank simple defined *Corruption is the abuse of public office* (either offices hold by politically elected representatives or bureaucrats) *for private gain*. It is a social and cultural phenomenon and has a broad classification.

- ☞ Highest level of corruption bypolitical leaders
- ☞ Middle levels of corruption by bureaucrats
- ☞ Lower level of corruption by bribe demanders and bribe givers at gross roots.

M.G Devasahayam described that Bribe-giver comes under three broad categories those who give "*rush money*" for getting what is rightfully due to them without waiting in anguish; those who give "*hush money*" to escape from the clutches of law and those who pay "slush *money*" for big favours and contracts, thereby making, big money[ii].

Perceptions of Corruption

Miroslav Lajcak of Slovakia, President of the U N General Assembly observed that, 'Accountability', 'Governance', 'Regulation' and 'Transparency' are the most powerful words andalso not to ignore the most attracting word'corruption' is the reality of everyday that destroying all things from its path. It stifled growth and crushed trust between people and government[iii]. Corruption can bring entire institutions and administration to their knees. Because of corruption the most needed people are far away from the allocated funds of development.

Today common man was completely frustrated by the corrupt activities in public offices and by public servants for getting any legal document either birth certificate, legal heir certificate or nativity certificate. Corruption is indivisible part of human behaviour. The desires and greediness arse two inseparablemagnets from human life. Power is an unfolded spark for the growth of corruption. It is the political power that straight away produces the explosive impact on society. Lord Acton warned *that power corrupts and absolute power tends to corrupts absolutely*. Similarly Justice Subramaniam also observed that 'Corruption is spreading like cancer in our great nation'.

To check the abuse of power and for the control of corruptive practices by public servants legislativemeasures are enacted in the interest of the society. The first step to form the corruption free society the parliament passed the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988,

Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, Right to Information Act, 2005 and Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013. But the anti-corruption law and enforcement machinery is proved as toothless in combating corruption and corruptive practices from public offices.

Factors responsible for corruption

There are numerous factors are responsible for the corruption and corruptive practices. The following are not the exhaustive causes for corruption.

i.   Monopoly of bureaucrats

Bureaucrats are sole authority and have power to grant and revoke all kinds of licences, permissions and relaxations to the needy public, example the term "licence raj".

ii.   Tax Evasion and Avoidance

Collection of tax is a primary source of income for the government. Tax evasion and avoidance are the corruptive practices of tax payers from escaping to pay tax for personal gaining and causing financial loss for the government.

iii.   Political lobbying

Holding political position andpower is the highest factor for growing corruption and corruptive practices. There are many numbers of political leaders who involved in the charges of scams and hawalas of crores of rupees and found guilty.

iv.   Lack of openness, accountability and transparency

The strongest democracy builds on the core principles of transparency of administration, openness, accountability and responsibility in governmental policies and resources distributions.In reality lack of transparency in regulations are proved ineffective and insufficient control mechanism is encouraging corruptive administration.

v.   Ignoring code of conduct

Ethical standards are completely ignoredby the political leaders and bureaucrats in discharging the duties honestly. Moral principles are administered orally and followed up to taking of oaths.

Personal greediness causes to unfettered desire for money or power that knowingly decline to follow ethical values because of cultural atmosphere and lack of ethical values in education raises the corruption on high peak. Now, the technological innovation, initiatives in

e-governance brings the revolutionary changes not only in controlling the corruption but also in transparent and openness of administration at public offices.

II.   E- Governance initiatives and control of corruption

Professor Klitgaard's and Rose Ackerman draw the outline of corruption in briefly sum up in the following equation.

Corruption = Monopoly of Bureaucrats + Discretion of administration – Transparency in governance

E- Governance

Poor governance and corruption shatter the economic structure of the country. It is a serious threat for poverty reduction programmes and unduly affects the poor. The Government must adopt the strengthen governance measures that significantly reduce the corruptive practices from its offices. Prevention of corruption requires the governmental approaches by encouraging transparency example in awarding contract and execution and the bidding process.

E-Governance is known for using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to create "Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent" (SMART) governance. The reason for implementing e-Governance is to improve processes in governance and outcomes with a view to improving the delivery of better public services to citizens transparently, honestly and openly.

The purposes of e-Governance are:

a) Openness, transparency and accountability in administration
b) To give better services for citizens
c) Better efficiency within governments
d) Empowerment of people by providing information
e) Advanced interfaced in business and industry.

E-Governance is a powerful tool to improve the quality of government services to citizens, to bring more transparency in administration, to reduce corruption and biased decisions, to make government more accessible and to reduce costs for citizens. Due to time and space shortage this research presents the limited imitative and objectives of e-governance for better understanding[iv].

Sr.No	E-governance Initiatives and name of the Programme	Objectives and benefits
I.	**G2C** (Government to Citizen)	Computerized ownership copies, updated copes of RORs (Record of Rights)
		Guaranteeing accuracy, transparency and speedy dispute resolution
	Computerization of Land Records	Controlling the discretionary powers of public authorities and reduce the opportunities for corruptive practices
		Setting of comprehensive land record system for better administration by planning
		Providing the citizen-centric services
		Issues of land records with digital signature
	Bhoomi Project	Connectivity with Bhoomi to courts and banks
		Scanning of survey maps link with Bhoomi
		Decentralization of issue of land records
		Income certificate
		Domicile certificate
	Gyandoot (Madhya Pradesh)	Caste certificate
		Public grievance redressal
II.	**G2B** (Government to Business)	Reduction of opportunities for corruption and corruptive practices
		Equal opportunities for all vendors
	e- Procurements	Standardize the procurement processes in all governmental departments
	e-Contracts	Transparency in bidding process
		Increasing efficiency of Technical Scrutiny
		Reducing the cost and time saving

Benefits of E-Governance

1. It provide the better access to information and quality services for citizens
2. It bring the simplicity, openness, efficiency and accountability in the government
3. It enable the participation of citizen in governmental process
4. It checkout the corruption and corruptive practices in public offices

Use of technology to disrupt Corruption

Digital transformation of Government needs openness, transparency and efficiency through the expansion of digital services and online platforms. The aim of the digital government is by transforming paper based and traditional government into citizen-centric. The services of public offices must be render fast, better and smart as per the needs of citizen.

By digitalization government can easily handle the corruption and removed the red-tapism. It is possible only through new technology that enables the government to burst the corruption and corruptive practices behind the paper based administration of bureaucrats[v].

Open Database of Government

By the Open Data process government working will be comes under the scan of transparent and accountability that gives the better quality and timely response to public work. The Government by using thenew technology generate huge data relatingpublic information and working mechanism at public offices that sometimeuseful for cross referencing of databases. The databases also helpful for government to identified the uncovered hidden practices. Procurement data (public tenders), property registries, open public contracts and tracking technology are some good examples of open database technology[vi].

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a key role in curbing corruption. AI will be proved more effective to fight against corruption and corruptive practices by boosting with new strategies. Automated technology brings revolutionary changes in coming years at working places and organizations because of new regulations, technological advancements where human beings, robots and automated entities work together[vii]. As Artificial Intelligences have corrupt free tendencies and reduce the corruption to a great extent.

I-T Department and Advanced Technology

The Income Tax Department with the help of technology by using automated system to reduce the tax avoiding two new procedures are introduced. To reduce harassments, the Income Tax authorities will issue summons and notices through a centralised computer

system, which will have a computer-generated unique Document Identification Number (DIN). Any communication not havingDIN will be *non est* in law.

I-T department will begin faceless and paperless income tax proceedings. It will form a national and regional e-assessment centres and assessment units for electronic assessments and proceedings, including refunds. The national centre will send notices to assesses asking why their case were not take up for assessment. The centre will then assign the case to assessing officer[viii].

III.   Supportive arguments by technology to get rid of corruption

The following are the some of the advanced technologies that adopted and proved successfully to prevent corruption at public offices, organizations, corporations,hospitals, universities, colleges, public and private business and everywhere.

- ☞ Cashless society initiatives like online deposits and payments, mobile banking, paytm wallets etc.,

- ☞ Avoiding human interact by starting service portals for public services like '*aaplesarkar'* under Maharashtra Right to Public Services Act

- ☞ Tax is a prime and sole source of Income for the Government. The Income Tax Department much benefited by adopting new technology like, e-Payment of Taxes, e-File Return, E-filling website for PAN-Aadhaar Linkage and much more.

- ☞ '**ipaidabribe.com**' is awareness generating web among citizens and only one of its kind of initiative to deals with corruption that tie together with collective strength of citizens.

Conclusion and suggestions

Advancements in new technology transform all transactionsand bring openness, transparency and effectiveness in public and private sectors. It is tremendously minimise the corruptive practices from all levels.A wider range of change inadministration activities should be carried out to build awareness among the general public against

corruptivepractices. The public, media, NGO's,intellectuals and all public and private organizations must collectively participate in a fight against corruption free society. The following are the suggestions.

1. Corruption was a global phenomenon in developed and developing countries like. It is poised to serious threat to the rule of law, jeopardizing the fair distribution of resources and impeding socioeconomic development.

2. Governments must not only make, implement and enforce laws, but also enlist the media, the private sector, civil society and academia in the battle against corruption.

3. Create the awareness among the common public regarding the Right to Information Act.

4. State has to create corroborative mechanism for sharing information and investigation in corruption related offences.

5. Government continuously encourage using training, advocacy and technology to empower people against corruption.

6. Promote the rule of law and human rights were precondition for fight against corruption and link connecting corruption, organized crimes and money laundering

Endnote and References

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