

What is Corruption?

Corruption is dishonest behaviour by those in positions of power. It starts with the tendency of using public office for some personal benefit.

Moreover, it is unfortunate that corruption has, for many, become a matter of habit. It is so deeply entrenched that corruption is now considered a social norm. Hence, corruption implies the failure of ethics.

What are the Reasons Behind Corruption in India?

Lack of Transparency: A lack of transparency in government processes, decision-making, and public administration provides fertile ground for corrupt practices. When actions and decisions are shielded from public scrutiny, officials may engage in corrupt activities with reduced fear of exposure.

Weak Institutions and ineffective legal frameworks: Many of India's institutions responsible for enforcing laws and regulations are either weak or compromised. This includes law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and oversight bodies. Weak institutions can fail to hold corrupt individuals accountable and may even facilitate corruption.

A perception of impunity due to the inadequate punishment of corrupt individuals can encourage further corruption. When individuals believe they can get away with corrupt practices, they are more likely to engage in them.

Low Salaries and Incentives: Public officials, especially those in lower-ranking positions, are sometimes paid low salaries. This can make them more susceptible to bribery and other corrupt practices, as they may see corruption as a means to supplement their income.

Bureaucratic Red Tape: Lengthy and convoluted bureaucratic procedures and excessive regulations can drive individuals and businesses to engage in corrupt practices to expedite processes or bypass obstacles.

India's complex economic environment, which involves various licences, permits, and approvals, can create opportunities for corruption. Businesses may resort to bribery to navigate this environment.

Political Interference: Political interference in administrative matters can compromise the autonomy of government institutions. Political leaders may pressure officials to engage in corrupt activities for personal or party gain.

Cultural Factors: There can be a cultural acceptance of corrupt behaviour in certain contexts, which perpetuates corruption. The notion that "everyone does it" can lead individuals to engage in corruption without feeling morally compromised.

Lack of Whistleblower Protection: Inadequate protection for whistleblowers can deter individuals from reporting corruption. The fear of retaliation can silence potential whistleblowers and allow corruption to thrive.

Social Inequality: Social and economic disparities can contribute to corruption, as individuals with wealth and power may use their influence to secure preferential treatment and engage in corrupt practices without repercussions.

What are the Reasons for the Prevalence of Corruption in Civil Services?

Politicisation of Civil Services: When civil service positions are used as rewards for political support or swapped for bribes, the opportunities for high levels of corruption increase significantly.

Lower Wages: Lowering wages for civil servants compared to those in the private sector. Certain employees may resort to taking bribes in order to compensate for the difference in wages.

Administrative Delays: Delays in the clearance of files are the root cause of corruption as common citizens are coerced to grease the palm of erring officials and authorities for expedited clearance of the files.

Colonial Legacy of Unchallenged Authority: In a society which worships power, it is easy for public officials to deviate from ethical conduct.

Weak Enforcement of Law: Various laws have been made to curb the evil of corruption but their weak enforcement has acted as a hindrance in curbing corruption.

Consequences of corruption/impact of corruption

On Economy:

A Decrease in Foreign Investment: Corruption in government bodies has led to many foreign investments going back from developing countries.

Delay in Growth: An official who needs to pass clearances for projects or industries delays the process in order to make money and other unlawful benefits.

This leads to delays in investments, the starting of industries, and also growth.

Lack of Development: Funds allocated for infrastructure projects often get syphoned off due to bureaucratic lethargy and administrative inefficiency, which acts as a deterrent for the investors such that the profit to investment ratio is minimised significantly.

Corruption can increase costs and reduce access to basic services like education, health, and social programs. It can also reduce private sector investment, which can harm economies, job opportunities, and markets

Corruption can also increase income inequality and poverty by perpetuating an unequal distribution of asset ownership and unequal access to education

