

8. Corruption Prevention Measures Recommended by Kautilya

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Abstract:

Corruption is all-pervading phenomena. Today, it is observed that the world is going through the problem. The malady of corruption prevailed in all periods of history; i.e. ancient, medieval, modern. It can be said that history of corruption is as old as the history of mankind. The purpose of this research paper is to investigate the remedies of corruption as was suggested in Kautilyas Arthashastra.

Keywords: Corruption, remedies of corruption, Kautilya Arthashastra.

Full Text:

We have an ancient civilization at one hand and at the other have a bright vision for future. Computerization will solve all our problems. What could be a greater instance of corruption that trusting a machine more than a human being? Corruption is a disease of soul. It cannot be cured permanently. For its temporary elimination one has to go through historical measures- as it is said that old is gold. Corruption arises in a human soul but dies with a human body. We have Vedas, Upanishadas, Smritis and Puranas. We constantly look forward to the past. There is a lot of machinery available to curb or control corruption since time immemorial, even though it is endless; e.g., Courts, Corruption Prevention Act, 1948 & 1988, CBI, CVC, RTI etc. This article is focused on corruption and its remedial measures as recommended by Kautilya.

The objectives are:

- 1) To look after whether there was corruption in the ancient days.
- 2) To look after the remedial measures of corruption in Arthashastra.
- 3) To examine whether those are existed and suitable in the present situation.

Corruption: An Obstruction over Global Peace

Corruption disposes social environment and blocks not only social but political, economic, cultural and psychological growth also. It destroys the economy by diverting resources from developmental goals. Universally, at one hand a common man dreams to become rich over a night; at the other hand, this common man's life is endangered because of enforcement of dangerously raised heads of terrorism, drug-trafficking, bomb-blasting, gun-running and etc. corruption at one place becomes a threat of life everywhere.

Corruption is a major cause of black parallel economy and a serious threat to political and economic stability of any country. Talking on global corruption, the third world countries are directed by the rampant corruption of rich countries. It is clear that the first world countries are often involved in the corruption scandals

investigated in the third world countries. In these countries day by day, law and order, peace and security, friendliness and kindness is disappearing.

The countries which are top in corruption index are lesser peaceful and their human development index is also low, whereas the countries those are least corrupt are more peaceful and have higher human development index.^{2,3,4}

India is the more corrupt country and stands lower in the global peace index, human development index and democracy index also.^{2,3,4} Unfortunately, in all the lists, India's position is not good. Talking about Indian scenario, at one hand a common man is talking about globalization and living in a technocrat world at the other the life is becoming more and more unsafe, peace less, unstable and expensive.

There is no an absolute answer on corruption. Shall we get any reply from Arthashastra-is investigated in this paper.

Kautilya's Arthashastra

Kautily/Arya Chanakya/Vishnugupta was a learned Brahmin. He was previously working with King Mahapadmananda of Magadha. There was a very serious clash between both of them and Kautilya left Mahapadmananda and joined to Chandragupta Maurya. This is a golden moment in the administrative history of India. After arising Chandra Gupta, to guide Him how to rule, Kautilya wrote ***Arthashastra***.

It basically is a classique of Indian politics and administration even though entitled Arthashastra. The period of creation of Arthashastra is 321 B.C. to 300 B.C. It contains 15 volumes with 150 chapters and 6000 shlokas. It is a very deep and all purpose study of Indian politics, law philosophy, social system and problems, governance, public servants, public policy, disaster management, international relations, military and so on. It can be said that everything under the sky is discussed by Kautilya.

Kautilya on corruption

In the eighth chapter of second volume, he had discussed on corruption. Basically, the Sanskrit word *bhrash* conveys the sense of corruption better. It means failed, strayed, or deviated from, separated from, deprived of, expelled or turned out from, decayed, lost, vicious, and depraved.

According to Kautilya, human nature poses corruption. It is human psyche. He said that as it is impossible not to taste the honey that finds at the tip of the tongue. So it is impossible for a government servant not to eat up at least a bit of the King's revenue.⁵ The government servant employed by government can never locate corrupting. The level of corruption is steady and may be there could have been marginal fluctuations. In support he said that the servants are like fish in water. No one can tell that when fish drink water or how many water fish drink or whether drink or not-the rule is applied to the government servant also.⁶ No one can tell when the servants do corruption; up to what extent it is done-always are unanswerable questions. Both the examples; i.e. honey and fish are relevant today also. Kautilya's these thoughts make it clear that corruption was existed in those days also. Because government property was king's personal property also, it was limited. A corrupt was punished strictly so that there was a fear in the minds of corrupts. What is different that in those days corrupt was seen as a criminal and today corrupt is given a status, prestige in society. Corruption has become a fashion. There is no fright among corrupt is a precarious.

He afterwards focused on the ways of corruption and its remedies. He had illustrated forty ways of corruption. To gist those, practices and acts that can be termed corrupt such as, causing loss of government, misuse of government property, misappropriation of revenue, falsification of documents, inequality in work, false budgeting, inequality in price, weight, numbering, and quality of the production, obstruction in lawful process, exploiting public, corrupting the officials, embezzlement, taking bribe, failure of expenditure under work, false measurement, allocating expenditure under wrong heads, cheating with weight⁷ etc. Today all these acts and ways are existed. After giving the ways of corruption, Kautilya has enlisted the reasons. According to Kautilya, the administrative officers are lusty of

wealth. Wine and woman are their attractions. The bad habit of wine and woman enforces for corrupt practices. Secondly he stressed on the payment of the public servants. Kautilya posed that public servants are paid less than their duties. This causes them to support for fraud. Kautilya suggested appointing an officer (Guptehera) to look after them but it was observed that they themselves were involved in the corrupt practices because they were also paid less. He suggested keeping these Guptehera directly under King. Another notable thing was a lot of difference in the payment in senior and junior officers that invited the juniors to be corrupt. These causes of corruption are existed in the present Indian administrative system also.

The above discussion strongly supports that corrupt mind was existed in the ancient days also.

Remedies on corruption

Kautilya suggests :

- 1) Psychology or mental set up of the corrupt officers should be changed so that itn should be eliminated forever.
- 2) To prevent and control corrupt practices and officers, law should be followed strictly.
- 3) In corruption cases, all the concern senior or junior officers in that particular department should be checked. The non-corrupt supporter of corruption should also be treated as corrupt-hiding a crime of corruption is another crime.
- 4) Working procedure of the officers should be supervised regularly. For that purpose a special supervisory officer should be appointed. This supervisor must be continuously in contact with the king so that the king should know about malpractices taken place in department.
- 5) In collection of revenue and other cesses, if there should be any difference, the concern officer or public servants should be enquired immediately.
- 6) The public servants should be transferred continuously from one department to another so that they should not get a chance to make corruption boldly in any new department.
- 7) There should be '*Information Organization*'. The informer should inform the king about corruption in any department. A person who is working as Informer should keep undisclosed.

- 8) A corrupt officer should be punished in by dandas, transfer and as per religious faiths.
- 9) Kautilya suggested strict dandas to the corrupt; e.g. supporter of corruption should be given danda similar to a corrupt officer-that is a corrupt officer have to pay full amount how much is fraud even though only half amount should be fraud. (e.g., if a person had made fraud of 100 panas (Currency) out of 500 panas, he/she must give a danda of 500 panas.) If only half amount will prove as fraud, the informer should be given reward; but the information provided prove wrong, the informer will be punished by mrityudanada or in terms of money. Finally the property of a corrupt officer should be sealed and converted in the government property.
- 10) The corrupt should be given punishment in the nature of money or jail. It should be depended upon the amount how much is fraud.
- 11) A corrupt person and his crime should be disclosed publicly so that no another person would make a shameful deed.

These are the remedies suggested by Kautilya. To control corruption today also the government practices these. It proves that Kautilya's thoughts on corruption are still relevant.

Relevance of Today's Remedies

Today, to control the virus of corruption only a way is remained is strong participation and willingness of the corrupt. In the ancient days corrupt was treated as sin. If today we will change a psyche of a fraudulent that he/she is doing bad or wrong, then we will get clean office bearers. If a person decides and try to avoid corrupt ways, it will become a mob psychology to not do bad things as like Kautilya had suggested. His second remedy is also notable. Today there are Laws and Acts to prevent corruption but there is a huge absence of awareness as well as utilization of those. As per Kautilya, if the Laws will follow strictly, corruption-free society will not far away. According to him, to hide a crime is another crime- if a witness of corrupt practices will also punished, then no person will support corrupt and corruption.

Like Kautilya's '*Information Organization*' today we have the Central Vigilance Commission, Lokayukta and very recently Lokpal. Off course, effective practices by -

all these machineries are necessary. A good suggestion by him is strict dandas or punishment to the corrupt. Punishment should be as strict as another person will be afraid to do the wrong deeds. Recovery of ten percent of bribe will prove a fine remedy to attack on corrupt. Another suggestion regarding imprisonment is also okay. Disclosing name is well. Before some days, N. Vittal, ex-Commissioner, CVC declared a list of some corrupt officers and politicians on CVC webpage; again it brought a terror in their mind and with its remaining part was disclosed.

Conclusion

In the primitive and medieval societies scope of public authorities was small- obviously, the scope of corruption was also less than today, but it was existed! A very strict follow up of the Acts, Laws and proper implementation of remedial measures will bring a least corrupt society in India. So why not to go with Kautilya? It will bring a day of clean, transparent, accountable, responsive administrative system in India. Now it is a challenge and an urge to stand in universal competition before us. Advocacy for peaceful life, higher rate of human development and stable administration and politics is on demand. For a proper utilization of wealth of our country, a problem solution will get from our old assets only.

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