

Corruption in all its Entirety

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Abstract: Corruption is a complex and widespread problem that afflicts countries worldwide, penetrating diverse sectors and institutions. It denotes the exploitation of authority for individual benefit, frequently integrating practices such as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, or favouritism. This unethical conduct not only erodes confidence in public institutions but also has extensive ramifications on both society and the economy. Corruption has a tremendous impact on society. It undermines the confidence of the public in government officials and institutions, resulting in a deterioration of social unity. If citizens regard their leaders as corrupt, they may develop a lack of trust in the democratic process and become disenchanted with the principles of the rule of law. Consequently, this can lead to political instability, societal turmoil, and potentially even acts of violence.

Keywords: Corruption, Entirety.

1. Introduction

Corruption refers to the exploitation of authority that has been given in order to obtain personal benefits. Corruption undermines confidence, diminishes the strength of democratic systems, impedes economic progress, and exacerbates inequality, poverty, social fragmentation, and the environmental disaster. In order to effectively uncover and prosecute corruption, it is imperative that we possess a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which corruption operates and the underlying structures that facilitate it.

Corruption includes several manifestations; such as instances where public officials solicit or accept monetary compensation or favours in return for providing services. Politicians engaging in the misappropriation of public funds or engaging in nepotism by awarding public positions or contracts to their supporters, acquaintances, or relatives, while corporations engage in bribery to secure profitable agreements with politicians. Corruption is pervasive and can occur in various domains, including business, government, the judiciary, the media, civil society, and across sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and sports. Corruption involves individuals from several sectors, including politicians, government officials, public servants, businesspersons, and members of the public.

Corruption occurs covertly, frequently aided by proficient facilitators such as bankers, attorneys, accountants, and real estate agents. It thrives due to obscure financial systems and the use of anonymous shell companies, which enable corrupt individuals to launder and conceal their unlawfully acquired wealth. Corruption exhibits flexibility in various contexts and

evolving conditions. It has the ability to adapt and develop in reaction to modifications in regulations, laws, and even advancements in technology. (Transparency International, 2024)

A. The Importance of Addressing Corruption

In order to combat corruption, it is imperative that we fully adopt and promote transparency. Transparency entails understanding the identities, motivations, details, methods, and quantities involved. It refers to illuminating the formal and informal regulations, strategies, procedures, and behaviours. Transparency enables the people to hold those in authority accountable for the collective benefit. Accessing and obtaining information is a fundamental entitlement of individuals that can serve as a protective measure against corruption, while also fostering confidence in those who make decisions and in public organizations. Nevertheless, transparency encompasses more than just the act of providing information; it also entails ensuring that the information is readily accessible, comprehensible, and utilizable by the general public. (Transparency International, 2024)

The necessity of addressing corruption arises from its ramifications. It redirects the resources, including financial and social resources (such as trust), that are necessary to accomplish all of our Sustainable Development Goals. Corruption exacerbates international crime and war, resulting in the displacement of communities and the destabilization of governments. It worsens the food, energy, and environmental crises. It weakens democratic systems and generates cycles of reinforcement that magnify humanity's worst inclinations. Corruption disproportionately impacts individuals who are most vulnerable and least capable of protecting themselves from its consequences, namely the impoverished and disadvantaged.

The international community should actively seek chances to provide assistance, guidance, and promote the advancement of current and future advocates against corruption. The Chandler Sessions on Integrity and Corruption aim to bring together high-ranking anticorruption authorities from around the world in order to develop a worldwide network of leaders. These sessions also provide these officials with the most up-to-date data on the most effective techniques for combating corruption. The Apolitical Foundation is also providing support to the upcoming cohort of principled leaders. However, due to the mortality of leaders, it is essential for the global community to

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actively seek ways to establish openness and accountability in governance, management, and personnel procedures. This will help foster cultures of integrity in governments, civil society, and the commercial sector.

This surround-sound project is particularly challenging and necessitates the commitment of funders and partners to contribute in the transformation of culture. Leadership encompasses more than a punitive strategy that penalizes individual wrongdoers—it also involves publicly declaring and constructing responsible, open, and fair societies, setting a positive example, and motivating others to embrace a more ethical position.

Experts and authorities in the sector have identified several strategies that can effectively align the various components of the anti-corruption puzzle, fostering a collective effort and driving a cultural transformation. The following items are included:

Identify allies: Even within the most morally compromised organizations, institutions, and governments, there exist individuals of integrity who are dedicated to promoting the welfare of society. Collaborating with these individuals who hold influential positions and providing them with resources, mentors, and assistance can empower them to become catalysts for transformation.

Seize opportunities: Shifts in leadership, legislation, and situations frequently offer chances to modify cultures and establish fresh standards. Capitalizing on favourable circumstances necessitates quick reactions and adaptable approaches.

Dismantle organizational barriers: Every institution has the ability to utilize its influential authority to promote the cause of combating corruption and encourage and motivate a culture of honesty and ethical behaviour. Initiating anti-corruption endeavours does not necessarily require commencing with anti-corruption agencies. Partners and funders should enhance and bolster the voices of civil society: They have the ability to safeguard and advance a thriving civic environment as a component of fostering ethical cultures, and they can provide opportunities to amplify civil society perspectives within their areas of focus. The active involvement of individuals and groups beyond the public sector is crucial in both preventing corruption and uncovering it when it does happen.

Establish openness and accountability as institutional norms: Implementing codes of conduct for public officials, ensuring an independent judiciary, developing frameworks to prevent bribery, enacting whistleblower legislation, and implementing conflict of interest and asset disclosure systems can foster a culture of integrity. Furthermore, it is crucial for the government to be prepared to implement these policies and guarantee that the individuals responsible for carrying out these policies are adequately funded, taught, and equipped.

In order to increase the presence of successful advocates against corruption worldwide, it is necessary to establish and support ethical leaders who can promote the growth of this movement. When leadership leads to success, it is important to maintain the victories and the accompanying enthusiastic media coverage to guarantee that they have a lasting impact on the

course of history. Christopher Stone, a professor of public integrity at Oxford University, refers to these fleeting moments of satisfaction as a "sugar high" that ultimately does not influence the trajectory of history. Allocating resources towards developing strong leadership and establishing institutions that promote ethical behaviour may not yield immediate gratification, but it can foster sustainable societal transformations characterized by reduced levels of corruption. (blogs.worldbank.org, 2023)

2. Types of Corruption

Corruption can be classified by its nature. This chapter will review all the likely forms corruption could take. This will give a more vivid narrative to help identify corruption when it occurs. Corruption would be reviewed with respect to its political, corporate and administrative nature.

A. Political Corruption

Political corruption, as defined by most political scientists, refers to any exchange between individuals in the private and public sectors where public resources are unlawfully turned into personal benefits. It highlights the essential role of the state and its agents in corruption, regardless of the specific level of authority where corruption occurs. Political corruption, in a stricter sense, pertains to political decision-makers. High-level political corruption occurs at the upper echelons of the political hierarchy. Corruption occurs when politicians and state agents, who have the authority to create and uphold laws on behalf of the people, are corrupt themselves. Political corruption occurs when individuals in positions of political authority abuse their influence to maintain and increase their power, social standing, and financial resources. (Amundsen, 1999)

Political corruption incorporates a variety of criminal activities and illicit behaviours carried out by those in positions of power prior to, during, and after their tenure in office. Corruption can manifest in various forms such as illegal political finance, influencing policy-making, state capture, election fraud, vote buying, misuse of state resources during elections, abuse of immunities and other privileges related to their position, and favouritism in appointments and decisions.

The presence, scope, and prevalence of various types of political corruption differ based on the particular social, economic, and cultural environments in which they occur. The prevalence of a specific sort of political corruption mostly depends on a country's legislative framework, institutional integrity, and overall integrity system. Corruption in political financing is a widespread issue in both developed and developing nations. However, vote-buying and election fraud are more common in African and Latin American countries, while abuse of power is rampant in East Europe, Central Asia, and African nations. (Bosso et al., 2014)

B. Corporate Corruption

Corporate corruption is the abuse of official authority by a company agent for personal or organizational gain. It centers on an actor situated within a corporation rather than a government entity. As previously said, this has significant implications

within the organizational setting that influences the actor's motives, available resources, organizational culture, and governance structures. Theories of government corruption may apply in some situations but not in others, requiring theories that consider the business context of such wrongdoing.

Corporate corruption primarily harms shareholders and stakeholders of the firm, rather than society as in government corruption. Some corrupt acts are conducted to benefit the corporation and its stockholders. Corruption through bribes to get a contract that would have otherwise been lost might result in significant financial gains from the contract. This component of corporate corruption is intricate and necessitates thorough attention and analysis to build a nuanced hypothesis regarding the costs and advantages associated with corporate misconduct. (Castro, Phillips and Ansari, 2020)

C. Administrative Corruption

The term "corruption" originates from the Latin word "corruptus," which translates to corrupted. In legal terms, it denotes the exploitation of a position of trust inside governmental branches or organizations, aiming to get material benefits that lack legal justification for oneself or others. Administrative corruption is prevalent in all government branches. Administrative corruption is corruption that mostly happens within state institutions, affecting individuals, organizations, and other entities in their operations. Defining this form of corruption precisely poses challenges. Administrative corruption is typically defined as a type of corruption when lower-level personnel are bribed to evade responsibilities or expedite certain corporate processes.

However, the term is frequently defined too broadly, leading to confusion with political corruption or the conflation of these two forms of corruption as a single entity (Philp, 1997; Della Porta and Vannuci, 1997; Mousavi and Pourkiani, 2013; Mousakhani and Rahmani, 2013, Ceva and Ferreti, 2017). The concept of administrative corruption extends beyond lower-level employees and can be challenging to differentiate from political corruption at higher levels of state administration. In addition to classic bribery, other forms of accepting, facilitating, or providing undue advantage are also prevalent. Administrative corruption is bribing or providing unjustifiable benefits to expedite legal services for businesses to operate smoothly and accelerate processes. In this scenario, there is no significant breach of the law, just an unconventional application of it that deviates from the norm, even though the process appears to be lawful. It involves bribery or offering unwarranted benefits in exchange for illegal services or actions that contravene regulations and laws (Pope, 2000, p. 3). Researchers often face challenges when studying administrative corruption due to the common misconception of equating it with political corruption or treating it as a uniform form of corruption. This approach is considered inaccurate in research on political or administrative corruption (Šumah and Borošak, 2020). For improved openness and more pertinent study outcomes, it is essential to address each form of corruption individually and together only at the indisputable points of interaction found at higher levels of state or public

administration. (Sumah, Borosak and Anzesumah, 2020)

3. Causes of Corruption

Individuals or groups engaging in corruption may be driven by many motivational causes. Below, a few of these will be analyzed.

Voluntary: Corrupt practices can sometimes be a planned and voluntary action made by a party involved, with the specific aim of getting an unfair advantage or earning an undeserved personal or corporate benefit.

To equalize the conditions and opportunities for everyone involved: In certain instances, the technique may be carried out in order to equalize the opportunities and create a fair competition. For instance, a contractor might feel obligated to present a bribe during the tendering process if it perceives that its rivals will also be proposing a bribe. On the other hand, a contractor can find it necessary to deliberately exaggerate a claim if they anticipate that the project owner will unjustly decrease their claim or make baseless counter-claims against them.

Blackmail: Under certain conditions, the payer may be coerced into giving a bribe. As an illustration, a contractor may receive a notification that unless they offer a bribe, they would not receive a payment that they have the right to receive. In certain situations, a police or immigration official may, under duress, request a bribe.

Conventional business procedure: Certain offences are committed with the misguided assumption that typical activities, such as exaggerating claims or wrongfully withholding payment, are acceptable in the business world and do not qualify as criminal offences.

A. Factors that Facilitate Corruption

The essence of infrastructure projects: Infrastructure projects inherently enable corruption. Specifically, the factors that contribute to the challenges in this sector include the intricate contractual framework, the wide range of skills and standards required, the various stages of project development, the significant scale, distinctiveness, and complexity of projects, the masking of certain work items by others, the lack of transparency, the level of government participation, the prevailing acceptance of the existing conditions, and the inadequate implementation of anti-corruption measures. These characteristics all contribute to a challenging environment for preventing and detecting bribery, extortion, and fraud. Each of these characteristics will be further elaborated upon in the following sections.

Contractual structure: Infrastructure projects typically involve numerous participants interconnected in an intricate contractual framework. Every link possesses its individual contractual documentation, as well as specific dangers and challenges. The project owner has the option to engage financiers, consultants, and a principal contractor to carry out the project. The primary contractor has the option to delegate significant portions of the project to prominent subcontractors. The sub-contractors have the option to further delegate portions of their work to sub-sub-contractors. The sub-sub-contractors

will procure equipment and materials from suppliers, and they may also subcontract certain portions of their work. The resulting contractual cascade might easily have over 100 contractual ties. Every contractual relationship presents the possibility for someone to provide a bribe in exchange for being granted the corresponding contract. Regarding every contractual relationship, labour and services are rendered in return for compensation. Every instance of such interaction presents a chance for corruption and/or deception, particularly in regards to acquiring certification for tasks or time extensions, receiving payment, colluding, manipulating prices, or making exaggerated claims. During the operational period, there is a potential for corruption in regards to the maintenance and public utilization of the project.

Project size: Certain projects can have a significant scale. Constructing major dams, power facilities, industrial plants, and roads requires substantial financial resources. Large projects provide greater opportunities for concealing substantial bribes and exaggerated claims compared to smaller initiatives. The uniqueness of projects lies in their significant variations in both substance and scale. Labour, equipment, and materials rates fluctuate based on market demand. Several projects are distinct. Consequently, comparing expenses is frequently challenging. This facilitates the manipulation of expenses and concealing of illicit payments.

The complexity of projects can vary, with some projects being more intricate and challenging than others. The correlation between events is frequently ambiguous. A significant number of individuals involved in a project seem to lack awareness or have conflicting opinions regarding the cause of a failure or the reasons behind exceeding budgetary limits. This facilitates the assignment of responsibility to other parties for issues, and enables the assertion of compensation for these issues, regardless of the validity of such claims. Furthermore, it gives rise to a motive for offering a bribe, as the determinations on causation and their financial repercussions can have significant ramifications. Corruption and exaggerated assertions can also be more effectively concealed, and attributed to other reasons, such as inadequate design or mismanagement.

Hidden work: The majority of components in an infrastructure project will be obscured by other components. For instance, concrete can hide structural steel, plaster can hide brickwork, casings can hide technical components, and cladding can hide roof systems. Consequently, the sector heavily relies on humans to certify the accuracy of the job prior to its concealment. This presents opportunity for individuals to engage in corrupt practices by offering bribes to certify excessive work or approve faulty or nonexistent labour.

Transparency deficit: The infrastructure sector lacks a culture of transparency. Funders, project owners, and project participants are not obligated to disclose information about the money, the project itself, and the identities of the participants, including the contractor, joint venture partners, sub-contractors, consultants, and agents. Costs are intentionally withheld, even when public funds are utilized. Historically, the importance of keeping business information confidential has been given

priority above the interests of the general public. Insufficient scrutiny of books and records may result in the failure to detect fraudulent activities. Lack of transparency hinders the ability to identify suspicious funding arrangements, questionable relationships that may enable corruption, projects with corrupt intentions, projects that have obtained planning permission through corrupt means, or fraudulent contract pricing.

The level of government intervention in infrastructure is substantial. The majority of significant global infrastructure projects are held by governments. Typically, even privatized projects need government permissions, such as planning clearance, or agreements with the government regarding the terms of public access to the final output. The considerable authority held by government officials in this matter, along with the intricate and intricate nature of the aforementioned industry, facilitates the ability of government officials to easily initiate projects for personal gain or demand substantial bribes in return for granting contracts or approving inflated prices or fraudulent claims.

Despite a notable shift in mindset in recent years, a considerable number of individuals employed in the infrastructure industry continue to embrace the existing state of affairs and show less effort to alter it. Corruption and dishonest practices have become deeply rooted in certain sectors and regions, to the extent that they are often seen as the standard. The following are some justifications occasionally provided by certain individuals in the sector:

Corruption is a widely acknowledged aspect of daily life in the country in question. The inhabitants of the nation perceive no wrongdoing in the situation. Bribery and deceptive conduct are not legally classified as crimes." These are just long-standing commercial practices. They are integral to the game. It is a common practice for everyone. The expense associated with a bribe is simply a necessary expenditure for conducting business. It is included in the contract. Ceasing our practice of bribery will not result in our competitors discontinuing their own." Hence, it is necessary for us to engage in bribery in order to maintain our competitiveness.

Lack of project anti-corruption measures: Several infrastructure projects lack sufficient procedures to avoid, dissuade, or identify corruption at any stage of the project. Certain projects may have implemented preventive measures, however these measures may only address specific components, such as monitoring the tender process, while neglecting other areas of the project that require adequate safeguards. Effective anti-corruption measures, mandated by government departments, enforced by project owners, and made a prerequisite for funding by funders, are crucial for combating corruption. Introducing and effectively implementing these measures would help decrease corruption in individual projects, even if other reasons of corruption mentioned in this section were still unresolved. (GIACC, 2020)

4. Impacts of Corruption

Although there is widespread agreement in the literature regarding the detrimental influence of corruption on economic growth, certain scholars persist in asserting that the impact of

corruption on growth is contingent upon the specific circumstances and is influenced by factors such as the legal and institutional framework of the country, the quality of governance, and the political regime. They deduce that in certain heavily regulated nations without efficient government structures and governance systems, corruption can serve as a means to offset bureaucratic obstacles and institutional deficiencies, hence facilitating economic processes.

Empirical data suggests that corruption is likely to have a negative impact on long-term economic growth via influencing investment, taxation, public spending, and human development. Corruption has the potential to weaken the regulatory framework and hinder the effectiveness of government institutions. This is because corrupt practices, such as rent-seeking, skew the incentives and decision-making processes.

A. Corruption as a Barrier to Economic Growth

Research in literature consistently demonstrates that corruption has a detrimental and direct influence on economic growth and development. Corruption also indirectly impacts a country's economic performance by influencing several elements that contribute to economic growth, such as investment, taxation, the level, composition, and efficacy of public expenditure.

Economists have extensively documented several channels via which corruption can impact economic growth. These include studies by Mauro (1995), Tanzi (1997), Gupta (2000), and Gyimah-Brempong (2001), among others.

Corruption skews incentives and market dynamics, resulting in the inefficient allocation of resources. Corruption redirects talent and resources, including human resources, towards activities that seek personal gain, such as defense, instead of productive activities. Corruption functions as an inefficient tax on businesses, ultimately increasing production costs and decreasing the profitability of investments. Corruption can also diminish the productivity of investments by compromising the quality of resources. Corruption reduces a country's human capital by diminishing the quality and quantity of health and education services.

B. Corruption Affects the Profitability of Investments

Corruption has a tendency to manipulate the decision-making process related to public investment and has an impact on the allocation of government spending. Corruption can cause public officials to allocate public resources based more on the potential for soliciting bribes, rather than on the basis of public welfare. This can be seen in cases when significant infrastructure or defence projects are used as opportunities for extortion. Mauro discovered a strong and inverse relationship between government expenditure on education relative to GDP and corruption in a sample of nations (Mauro, 1998). Tanzi and Davoodi have identified four channels via which corruption impacts economic growth, one of which being increased public investments. 2. Decreased government income 3. Reduce expenditures on other sectors of public spending, such as healthcare and education. 4. Decreased quality of public infrastructure (Tanzi and Davoodi, 1997).

Furthermore, certain scholars have presented empirical data indicating that corruption diminishes capital productivity and serves as a significant factor in investors' decision-making procedures. Lambsdorff's research reveals that a one-point rise in corruption on a scale from 0 (very corrupt) to 10 (extremely clean) leads to a 4% loss in productivity as a percentage of GDP and a 0.5% decline in net yearly capital inflows as a percentage of GDP (Lambsdorff 2003).

The correlation between corruption and investment levels is evident in the context of foreign direct investment (FDI), as demonstrated in a 2010 research article that provides an overview of the relationship between corruption and FDI (Zurawicki and Habib 2010). Wei (2000a, 2000b, 2001) also discovers that corruption has a crucial role in decreasing foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country where it occurs. According to a study conducted in 2008, which examined the outflows of US foreign direct investment (FDI) in 42 host countries, it was found that US companies are less inclined to invest in countries with high levels of corruption. This study was conducted by Sanyal and Samanta in 2008. Supporting these findings, additional research has validated that foreign direct investment (FDI) is positively associated with governance variables such as the rule of law, control of corruption, regulatory quality, and others (Gani 2007).

Corruption is also believed to raise the expenses associated with investing. A survey conducted in 2006 by Control Risks and Simmons & Simmons found that 25% of the respondents reported that corruption raised their international investment costs by up to 5%, while nearly 8% claimed that it increased their costs by 50% (Control Risks and Simmons & Simmons, 2006).

C. Corruption Undermines a Country's Revenue Collection Capacity

Corruption can result in a substantial decrease in the amount of tax money collected by a country. This, in turn, is likely to have negative effects on the country's budget. These findings are outlined in a literature study conducted by U4, which examines the connection between corruption and tax revenues (Nawaz, 2010). Research indicates that corruption has a negative impact on both the tax to GDP ratio and the overall economy. It leads to an increase in the underground economy, distorts the tax structure, and erodes the moral values of taxpayers. Consequently, this is likely to result in a further reduction in a country's tax revenue base (Attila 2008; Nawaz 2010). Tanzi and Davoodi (2000) discovered a significant negative link between corruption and individual income taxes, as well as taxes collected from VAT, sales tax, and turnover tax. A more recent study conducted in 2010 analysed panel data from Asian firms and concluded that public sector corruption has a substantial adverse effect on corporate tax payments. This implies that reducing corruption in the public sector could significantly enhance a country's tax capacity (Fuest, Maffini, and Riedel 2010). The study suggests that this is particularly applicable to small and medium-sized domestic companies, as they are able to decrease their tax liability in corrupt settings. Large multinational corporations, on the other hand, respond to

corruption in the public sector by directing their investments towards other countries, thus highlighting the potential losses incurred due to corruption.

Consistent with these discoveries, the World Bank discovered that nations with significant levels of corruption had a tendency to generate lower tax revenues. This implies that only governments with relatively low levels of corruption can maintain high tax rates, as indicated by the tax to GDP ratio (Friedman *et al.* 1999).

D. Corruption Affects the States Legitimacy and the Rule of Law

It is widely agreed that the way people perceive and experience corruption weakens the trust citizens have in public institutions and political processes. This also undermines social trust and the legitimacy of state institutions, ultimately having a harmful effect on the rule of law and democratic processes (Andreev 2008). Corruption, particularly minor corruption, significantly influences citizens' impression of corruption inside a certain country. This is because it directly impacts their everyday lives, eroding their trust in state institutions, democratic procedures, and the legitimacy of the government.

Recent events, such as the Arab Spring, have demonstrated that corruption has the ability to undermine public backing for corrupt governments. This is corroborated by empirical data which indicates that corruption undermines citizens' confidence in the legitimacy of the political system and diminishes interpersonal trust, as indicated by a research conducted in four Latin American nations (Seligson, 2003). Subsequent research has substantiated the robust association between trust, encompassing both interpersonal and political trust, and corruption, as demonstrated by Morris and Klesner in 2006.

Corruption has a detrimental effect on the rule of law, as demonstrated in a recent study examining the harm caused by different types of corruption (David-Barrett 2012). The author's conclusion is that any form of bribery, regardless of the payer's identity, the size of the bribe, or the intention behind it (such as expediting bureaucratic processes or gaining an unfair advantage), sends a message to the public that rules are not consistently enforced according to the law. This violation of public office rules significantly undermines the principle of the rule of law. (Chene and Helpdesk, 2014)

5. Strategies to Combat Corruption

Addressing corruption is a challenging and delicate matter, causing many political leaders who endorse such endeavours in theory to be reluctant to implement them in reality. Addressing corruption directly requires genuine bravery and perseverance.

Enforce penalties on significant wrongdoers: Effective approaches start by penalizing a select few prominent culprits. In order to initiate the dismantling of a corrupt culture that thrives on impunity, it is imperative to convict and penalize some prominent individuals involved in corrupt activities. The government should promptly identify a select few prominent tax evaders, a handful of significant bribe givers, and a small number of high-ranking government officials involved in bribery. Given that a campaign against corruption can

frequently devolve into a campaign targeting the opposing party, it is advisable to prioritize holding accountable a prominent member of the ruling party.

Engage individuals in the process of identifying corrupt systems: Efforts to combat corruption are most effective when they actively engage the general populace. Citizens, when consulted, can provide valuable information regarding the locations where corruption is taking place. Methods of consulting them encompass conducting methodical customer surveys, establishing citizens' oversight committees for public agencies, engaging professional organizations, consulting with village and borough councils, and utilizing telephone hotlines, call-in radio shows, and educational programs. Business individuals and organizations should actively engage in safeguarding the confidentiality of participants in research that investigate the functioning of corrupt processes in procurement, contracting, and related areas. These studies would prioritize the analysis of systems rather than focusing on individuals.

Emphasize the importance of addressing corrupt institutions through preventive measures, as decreasing corruption alone is insufficient. In a hypothetical scenario if a significant amount of money was allocated towards launching an offensive against a certain target, the proliferation of corruption, excessive red tape, and bureaucratic processes resulted in escalated expenditures.

If the costs in efficiency outweighed the gains of reduced corruption, then measures to reduce corruption would be counterproductive. The following are methods that countries can employ to develop effective strategies to combat corruption: replacing the individuals responsible for public activities, modifying the motivations of these individuals and the general population, gathering information to enhance the likelihood of detecting and punishing corruption, transforming the dynamics between public officials and citizens, and intensifying the societal repercussions of engaging in corrupt practices. For each situation, it is necessary to carefully evaluate the potential advantages, as well as the numerous potential drawbacks, of anti-corruption measures.

International collaboration can foster both the determination to combat corruption and the ability to effectively address it. Although it is clear that developing and executing methods to address systemic corruption is a delicate matter, international organizations have the ability to assist by offering assistance to promote democratic changes, foster more competitive economies, and enhance governance. However, a more concentrated endeavour is required: a methodical assault against organized corruption.

When corruption becomes entrenched and widespread, combating it requires more than just implementing liberal economic policies, establishing better laws, decreasing regulations, and giving more training, although these measures can be useful. To combat systemic corruption, it is necessary to give a disruptive shock that disrupts the corrupt balance. The process may involve the following steps:

The proposed measures include the establishment of a national coordinating body to develop and implement an anti-corruption strategy, as well as the creation of a citizens'

oversight board. Additionally, the focus of the initial efforts will be on a select few agencies or areas in order to achieve some early successes and build momentum. A capacity-building strategy will be implemented in key ministries, addressing issues of incentives and information. Furthermore, specific major offenders will be identified and prosecuted.

The primary focus in combating corruption should be on the reformation of existing systems. An economic strategy, along with significant political awareness, is necessary. The design and implementation of the measures discussed in this article should be customized to suit the specific requirements of each country. However, international cooperation can also have a significant impact. Occasionally, this involves offering specialized technical support, such as arranging advanced anticorruption courses or strategic consulting, or employing international investigators to locate unlawfully acquired funds in foreign countries. International collaboration can assist national leaders in cultivating political determination. Ultimately, global efforts can effectively communicate the important reality that corruption is a shared concern, and that collaborative solutions are necessary. (Klitgaard, 1998)

6. Success Stories in Fighting Corruption

There are no miraculous solutions or universally applicable cures for reducing corruption. Although there is a substantial amount of evidence that contributes to the discussion on the definition of corruption and effective methods to reduce it, there is a scarcity of studies on successful anti-corruption cases. This is primarily due to various factors, such as methodological difficulties and the ambiguity surrounding the definition of anti-corruption success.

However, it is important to consider the specific circumstances while creating and executing anti-corruption strategies. What may be effective in one country may not be suitable or could even have negative consequences in another one. Experts are increasingly recommending the use of focused methods that concentrate on certain sectors to implement anti-corruption measures that are practical and have the most impact.

The subsequent instances of successful outcomes and approaches to anticorruption efforts are intended to serve as examples rather than comprehensive accounts. Their primary objective is to mitigate the spread of false information in order to improve the integrity of elections. They also prioritize programs aimed at combating corruption at the local level and promoting a shift in attitudes towards corruption.

An illustration of utilizing access to information at the local level is demonstrated in New Delhi, India. In 2005, underprivileged city residents, aided by a local non-governmental organization (NGO), utilized the recently enacted right to information law to uncover significant inconsistencies in the subsidized food supplies provided by designated fair price shops as part of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). It was discovered that 80% of the grain intended for distribution to the impoverished was being diverted and illegally sold for personal gain. Following the discovery of these results and the influence from community advocates, the

local authorities implemented a comprehensive restructuring of TPDS to enhance the availability of food provisions for individuals holding ration cards (Burgman *et al.* 2007, 19).

In Taiwan, the process of becoming a democracy in 1992 and the shift in ruling parties in the 2000s resulted in the enactment of new laws and the revision of existing anti-corruption legislation (Göbel 2015; 3). The reforms implemented a precise legal definition of "corrupt" activity that aligns with international standards (Göbel 2015:3). The judiciary was professionalized and its independence was strengthened, particularly following the shift in ruling parties. Simultaneously, there was a substantial enhancement of anti-corruption agencies. Although the "institutional configuration" of anti-corruption authorities is not flawless, they are still seen as significant accomplishments for the country (Göbel 2015).

Since its establishment in 2003, Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi), or KPK, has achieved widespread acclaim both domestically and internationally for its efforts in prosecuting cases of high-level corruption. Furthermore, it received praise for its contribution to the enhancement of the nation on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

Nevertheless, in 2019, a modification to the anti-corruption law was passed, despite the resistance from civil society anti-corruption players (Transparency International 2021). The amendment has implemented substantial modifications to the institutional framework of the KPK, resulting in a reduction of its authority in conducting investigations and prosecuting cases (Juwita 2021). As an illustration, the KPK currently possesses a supervisory board, which could potentially impact its autonomy, and its investigators are obligated to fulfil their responsibilities under the guidance and oversight of the police (Transparency International 2021). This example demonstrates that previous success stories can be reversed.

From 2001 to 2017, the revenue authority in Rwanda implemented significant changes to its tax collecting methods, increased the skills of its staff, improved information management, and launched an extensive and ongoing public education campaign to restore civilian confidence in the system. The outcome of this campaign was that the nation amassed an equivalent amount of tax revenue in a span of three weeks in 2017 as it had accumulated in a year approximately 12 years' prior (Schreiber 2018). As part of this comprehensive reform, the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) implemented digitalization throughout the tax collection process, resulting in substantial advantages in combating corruption. For example, the use of digital payments decreases the probability of corruption by reducing the need for cash transactions. Additionally, the implementation of e-invoicing enhances transparency (Rosengard 2020: 33, 37).

Although Mauritius encounters several forms of corruption, including nepotism, cronyism, political corruption, and illicit financial flow (IFFs) threats, it has reported little instances of bribery in service delivery (Rahman 2019: 4-9). Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) 2019 Africa Report reveals that a mere 5% of Mauritians engaged in bribery in order to get public services such as education,

healthcare, identification cards, and safe water. This is significantly different when compared to the average of 28% observed in the 35 countries included in the GCB 2019 research conducted by Transparency International in 2019.

The prevalence of minor corruption was not consistently reported as being at such a low level in the past. In the past, Mauritius had well-established institutions, trained civil personnel, and a high degree of economic development. However, due to burdensome bureaucratic procedures, individuals were forced to pay bribes in order to receive services promptly, as stated by Dreisbach (2017: 2). In spite of its low prosecution and conviction rates, the anti-corruption agency effectively spurred change between 2009 and 2016. During this time, the objective was to facilitate systemic change rather than penalizing individual wrongdoers. Some say that this technique intentionally avoided addressing several significant issues in the U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk.

The selection highlights 12 successful instances of combating corruption, addressing issues such as the impact of financial resources on elections. Although it may not have completely eradicated corruption, it has effectively decreased smaller, more noticeable instances of bribery. (Rahman and Transparency International, 2022)

7. The Role of Individuals in Fighting Corruption

Citizen participation is not a recent phenomenon, although it has gained popularity in recent decades. According to the National Democratic Institute, a civil society organization located in the United States, citizens possess the "right to engage in decisions that impact public well-being." This participation serves as a crucial catalyst for democratic and socio-economic transformation, and is a vital means of empowering citizens. Citizen involvement is defined as a mechanism that allows citizens to have an impact on public decisions. It has always been a feature of the democratic decision-making process (Cogan and Sharpe, 1986, p. 283). Citizen engagement can be categorized as either direct or indirect. Direct citizen participation refers to the process in which citizens of a society share authority with public authorities to make significant choices concerning the community (Roberts, 2008, p. 5). International accords, including the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, emphasize the significance of citizen involvement.

The discussion on citizen participation has historically been around involvement in democratic decision-making, and there are various methods by which citizen participation is implemented. Processes that involve the participation of the people in making decisions and governing, typically through voting and other forms of political participation. This can be achieved by grassroots initiatives, such as voting, organizing at the local level, and active involvement. Alternatively, it can be facilitated by top-down approaches driven by organizations like the Open Government Partnership, which is covered in Module 4 of the UNODC Module Series on Anti-Corruption. Innes and Booher (2004) have delineated five justifications for

maintaining citizen involvement in public decision-making: The reasons for including public preferences in decision-making are to enhance the quality of decisions by integrating people's local knowledge, promote fairness and justice by giving voice to marginalized groups, validate public decisions, and comply with legal obligations.

Citizen participation in anti-corruption activities involves unique dynamics and approaches compared to citizen participation in other public processes. This is because the State may not consistently grant citizens equal access to space and information when it comes to combating corruption. Corruption is a phenomenon that undermines democratic processes to such an extent that Mark Warren (2004) has characterized it as a breach of democratic inclusion. Corruption circumvents the legally established laws and regulations and discriminates against individuals who do not engage in corrupt transactions (such as allocating public services to those who offer bribes or based on clientelism). Hence, citizens play a crucial role in terms of social accountability, actively opposing corruption by monitoring and evaluating the actions and choices of public officials, reporting instances of corruption and criminal activities, and demanding appropriate measures to combat it.

Corruption normalization poses a significant problem in numerous countries globally. The waning of public scrutiny of instances of corruption. Corruption comes to an end in an ironic turn of events. It is often regarded as an essential inconvenience or a convenient way to obtain certain valuable products. Under such circumstances, the discerning disposition of individuals towards corruption is diminished or completely eradicated. Alternatively, instances of extensive corruption, along with public discontent towards corruption in the public sector and inadequate governance (which is typically associated with high levels of corruption), can result in citizen indifference, a dearth of civic participation, and a lack of confidence in the political and democratic system. Apathy and apathy pose a significant threat since they allow corruption to proliferate and enable public officials to act with impunity when not held accountable by citizens (Olsson, 2014).

The issue of citizen indifference or a lack of civic engagement can be resolved by empowering citizens and using creative methods of citizen participation (McCormack and Doran, 2014). Transparency International, an NGO, introduced the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC)⁶ as a tool to combat corruption. Its purpose is to increase knowledge about corruption and its harmful effects, as well as to make it easier to report instances of misconduct. The initiative began with the establishment of three initial ALACs in Romania, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Subsequently, it expanded its reach by establishing over 60 centers across all continents. These clinics offer practical support to individuals who have been affected by corruption, helping them file complaints and address their concerns. By offering this assistance, the centers enable individuals to report wrongdoing and engage in anti-corruption initiatives.

In order to prevent the negative effects of corruption, such as inequality, dishonesty, public demoralization, instability, and violent extremism, it is essential for citizens in all countries to

be able to identify corruption and be empowered to participate. (UNODC, 2020)

8. Conclusion

Corruption weakens the trust and integrity of institutions, diminishes public confidence in government, and obstructs economic development. The act maintains disparities, nurtures a climate of exemption from punishment, and ultimately results in societal turmoil and unpredictability. Collaboration between governments, organizations, and individuals is crucial in the fight against corruption and the promotion of openness and accountability. This is essential for the development of a fair and equitable society.

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