

Spirituality - An Antidote to Corruption

By Pasa R. B. & Basnet M.

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|  ISSN 2631-2131 | “Corruption is danger sickness of this 21st century and the antidote of the corruption sickness is no other than spirituality” |
| Author(s) | Dr. Rajan Binayek Pasa Manoj Basnet |
| Association | Lecturer Member, Student Quality Circle Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University |
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| Accepted Date | 1 st May 2021 |
| Email | rajan.pasa@cdrd.tu.edu.np basnetm83@gmail.com |

Abstract

An antidote is cure of sickness. Corruption is danger sickness of this 21st century and the antidote of the corruption sickness is no other than spirituality. This viewpoint paper engages with the spiritual insights against corruption at the individual level that might be a fundamental dimension for good governance. It explores Vedas and some of the mystic’s views on corruption. It urges that anti-corruption laws and offices alone will not be able to cope with corruption because power doesn’t corrupt, people are corrupt. Corruption is inside peoples’ hearts and minds. Hence, along with the various dimensions of good governance, academia needs to motivate the development of spiritual insight in people. It will develop a playful attitude in individual life with peace in mind and compassion in heart, instead of competition, hatred and rat race behind success, money, position, status, and power.

Keywords: Corruption, Good governance, Spirituality, and Vedas,

Introduction

Spirituality can be an antidote to corruption and a possible indicator for measuring good governance. Ivanyna and Shah (2018) have developed four dimensions as responsive, fair, responsible and accountable governance to measure good governance. In the case of Nepal, transparency, public accountability, public hearings, public and social audits, public finance management have been practiced for ensuring good governance (MoFAGA, 2019; Sharma, 2016). ADB (2011) has developed four major indicators: accountability, participation, predictable legal frameworks for private-sector development and transparency (RTI anti-corruption) for measuring good governance. Among the indicators, this paper tried to appraise the issue of corruption from spiritual viewpoints that are still missing in Nepali academia.

Corruption begins with self-interest (Krishnamurti, 1984). Corruption is the most inhuman innovation of humans. Transparency International (2022) understood corruption as the abuse of trusted authority and a misuse of public office for private gain. Kunicova and Rose-Ackerman (2005) thus suggested selecting better representatives through frequent and competitive elections system for curbing corruption.

Although corruption refers most often to the behavior of public officials, citizens' decision to pay bribes or engage in corrupt behavior in some other way feeds the corrupt system. The literature on both the causes and consequences of corruption is voluminous. The potential causes of corruption include the wealth of a country, level of democracy, the size of unofficial economy, political institutions, political stability, trade openness, public sector recruitment and wages, income inequality, and voter turnout (Tavits, 2005, 2010; Harrison, 2007; Treisman, 2000). Sadhana (2011) mentioned corruption is a play of greed and power. This might be the reason that some public officials having decision-making power are more likely to engage in corruption and vice versa. Why do some citizens decide to offer bribes and others not? The causes of corruption, especially on the individual level, are not well understood. Corruption is ultimately the direct result of decisions, choices and behavior at the individual level but the growing research has largely focused on system-level or institutional explanations. One can restructure institutions or political systems, but if individual-level motivations for corrupt behavior are not understood, the restructuring may not be effective. Because these explanations focus almost exclusively on system-level variables, they tell us little about the individual-level motivation to engage in a corrupt exchange. To be sure, a few individual-level studies of corruption do exist. There is substantial evidence that corruption inflicts serious costs on the economy in terms of slowing growth and increasing inequality, on democracy in terms of decreasing government effectiveness, and on political stability and legitimacy (Doig & Theobald, 2000; Seligson, 2002).

In this background, let us try to understand what does spirituality means. Perkins offers a non-religious definition of spirituality calling it: the inner felt experience of a connection to something greater than our thoughts, feelings and material existence and is defined uniquely by each of us. Kings cite Rolheiser (1998) saying that: spirituality is about what we do with fire

inside us, about how we channel our eros and the insist that spirituality is not something we have ...it is something we are (Goodreads, 2022). Spirituality tends to be described in personal or experiential terms, is intrinsically focused, and relates to one's relationship with the sacred. It is an intensely personal state of mind (Rhodes, 2003 as cited in Houston & Cartwright, 2007). Cartwright (2019) and Tennessee (n.d.) reveal the relationships between spirituality and public service. However, such focus on spirituality-as distinct from religion is a fairly recent phenomenon, a result of the rise of secularism, a trend toward deinstitutionalization and individualization, and disillusionment with religious institutions and leadership (Houston & Cartwright, 2007). This might be the reason, the spiritual insights or spiritual seeking started seen as spiritual quest culture (Roof, 2000 as cited in Marler & Hadaway, 2002).

Objective and Method

Country is seriously suffering from corruption. Discourse analysis is a term that has come to have different interpretations for scholars working in different disciplines (Brown at al, 1983). It is a method for the analysis of connected speech (or writing). The method is formal, depending only on the occurrence of morphemes as distinguishable in academic discourses. Discourse analysis is the name given to a variety of different approaches to the study of texts, which have developed from different theoretical traditions and diverse disciplinary (Gill, 2000). Thus it is a discourse analysis of Veda, Sadhguru, Osho, Mahatma Gandhi, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Prithvinarayan Saha about corruption and its antidote.

Review

Corruption in Nepali Context

Corruption is a major obstacle to Nepali development vision even in the 21st century. It undermines democracy and destroys the credibility of the 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.

According to the report, Nepal's ranking improved dramatically in 2019, jumping 11 places to 113th place from 124th place in 2018. However, in the last two years, the country has been unable to achieve traction in terms of perceived public sector corruption. In 2020, Nepal remained ranked 117th out of 180 nations on the Corruption Perception Index. Nepal is ranked lower than Bhutan (25th), the Maldives (85th), India (85th), and Sri Lanka (85th) in South Asia (102th). The only countries in front of Nepal are Pakistan (140th), Bangladesh (147th), and Afghanistan (174) (Shrestha, 2022). Besides, corruption in Nepal is so rampant that despite many efforts to reduce it, it exists at all levels of public bureaucracy. 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). Besides, Upadhaya (n.d.) has mentioned psychological issues of corruption in the Nepali context. In this line, Nepali administration is characterized by different kinds of pathological trails 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 has been recognized as the major reason that impedes public bureaucracy on its developmental role.

While talking about anti-corruption programs, the code of Hammurabi (c. 1754 BC), the Great Edict of Horemheb (c. 1300 BC), and the Arthashastra (2nd century BC) are among the earliest written proofs of anti-corruption efforts. In the Nepalese context, Transparency International Nepal is running various multidimensional programs and tactics about corruption Control. This course of action combats in all forms at national and international levels through advocacy, civic pressure, professional interaction and awareness building. Some other objectives that regularly cover like discouraging abuse of public posts and authority for personal interests and motivating movements for an active role against corruption. Many social researchers have urged that anti-corruption laws and offices alone will not be able to cope with corruption. Hence, beyond doubt, good governance along with spiritual insight in people both elected representatives, administrative staff and service receivers can considerably reduce corruption.

Spiritual Insights: Vedas

Here, let us see what Vedas say about deadly disease corruption. Incidentally, Vedas are the supreme scriptures of followers of Sanatan Dharma and UNESCO has accorded Heritage Status to Rig Veda being useful for mankind. we give briefly what Vedas say on Corruption. Rig Veda contains a large number of hymns/riks on the causes of corruption and how to eliminate the same in any mosaic society of individuals following different professions. In the other three Holy Vedas are also a few mantras/hymns relate to Corruption (Sabhlok, 2010). Sama Veda 179 and 913 describe Corruption as hydra-headed, having nine heads (nine kinds) and it enters the human body through ninety-nine sources i.e. nine kinds of corruption enter through five senses, five sense organs and ethane i.e. the outward-looking mind (9X11==99). Later Ramayana described this evil through nine corrupt heads of Ravana. We burn his nine corrupt heads every year on Dasara day. Similarly, later Mahabharata described 99 sources of entry of corruption through 99 corrupt sons of blind Kaurva king Dhritrashtra. 99 virtues (powers of evil) are mentioned in Rig Veda 1-84-13

In Rig Vedas spirit of God is in the shuniya (cosmic void) of each subatomic particle of the atom- the building block of matter. Hence the matter has unsuspected vitality and its use on need-based living is a virtue and its excessive use is a sin. Corruption creeps in a society where economics (artha) is based on inert matter and the possession of wealth/any kind of matter having a predominance of tamasic guna of stupor is considered as a matter of pride. *MAYA*

creates a Golden Dazzling Disc for such individuals and hides the truth and Supreme Reality for them. Rig Veda says when even one human being dies of starvation, it is a signal that corruption has crept in society and avarnas (followers of non-divine professions) who want honor, power and wealth for themselves have started multiplying. The guidelines were given by the wise met physicists (rsis of yore) and wandering sages (munies of the Vedic period). The various virtuous concepts like iddm nan mmam—nothing for self all for society akin to enlightened liberalism of Aristotle, moderation of Vedas/middle path of Buddha and the noble concept of the illusion of comfort can help in arresting this nefarious and extremely dangerous drift, which is spreading like a wildfire. "Atharva Veda" warns people to refrain from corruption by the statement that the wealth earned through pious means flourishes and those who earn through immoral has to suffer (Changkakoti, 2012). In such a way new entrants like Swami Ramdev, Sri Sri Ravishankar and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, who have strong social tie,

They have held yoga workshops, meditation movement, protests against corruption, and social welfare (Bhatia & Rathore, 2020)

Sadhguru

Now, we would like to present a spiritual understanding of corruption through some mystic's lens. Firstly, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, a yogi, profound mystic, a visionary humanitarian, a prominent spiritual leader and the founder of Isha Foundation. "When your happiness is dependent upon what is happening outside of you, constantly you live as a slave to the external situation." by Jaggi Vasudev (Ganguly et al., 2021)

"Power doesn't corrupt, people are corrupt". When they get empowered, it becomes super visible. With power, corruption finds expression. If there is something called 'me' and there's something called 'you', corruption has started. Because what is me is more important than what's you, isn't it? Yes, or no? Once 'me' comes, what is mine and what is not mine will come. Once 'this is mine' and 'this is not mine' come, corruption is deepened. If you get very attached to 'what is mine' and 'what is not mine', then it's well established. Like this, it goes on. The more strongly you're identified with what is me and what is mine, you have become more corrupt.

Most of the corruption on the planet is because you're identified with something limited. Limited identity is corruption. The moment you're identified with 'what is me' and 'what is mine', you are corrupt, essentially corrupt. See, if you make your identity to yourself, you will rob the person next to you. If you make your identity for your community, you will do good things for your community at the cost of some other community. If you're identified with the nation, you will do good things to your nation at the cost of another nation. Yes, or no? But that is not perceived as corruption, but it is corruption. The whole world is full of corruption. It is not just in the political circle, it's across the board. Corruption should be that certain thing no matter what, you don't do. It's not because of the ethics of morals but simply because of your essential Humanity. We should have a larger sense of being human. This has to come experientially to every human being, not just the leaders. There is a serious amount of work to be done. Without

changing the basic quality of who you are, you want to fix the outside. No. Not one's well-being at the cost of another, well-being as it can be for all life on this planet, that's when you're not corrupt, isn't it? Anti-corruption is to build a truly inclusive political ethos, remember it's we who are our own true politicians (Jaggi, 2022).

Osho

“If you work without love, you are working like a slave. When you work with love, you work like an emperor. Your work is your joy.” -Rajneesh Osho. Acharya Rajneesh Osho is a famous mystic leader and philosopher of the late 20th century quoted this regarding the importance of working with love against corruption which was very popular and well appreciated among working-class people all over the world. In his quotation, he meant that by working without liking it makes people feel like a slave who is bound to do his task. Moreover, slaves do their task for the sake of their duty which only serves the demand as far as the task is concerned. On the other hand, he compared the worker who does his work with passion and love with an emperor who is self-motivated for his duties and task. In this manner, he is always ready to bring his work to the next level with his creativity and thought. In addition to that, an emperor enjoys his responsibility and largely happy about his work and responsibility (Jahan, 2021).

Secondly, Osho, is one of the most provocative and inspiring spiritual teachers of the twentieth century. Known for his revolutionary contribution to the science of inner transformation, the influence of his teachings continues to grow, reaching seekers of all ages in virtually every country of the world.

"Bribery, corruption and black marketing only prove the fact that there are too many people and too few goods. We refuse to understand this simple fact. Corruption is not a disease; it is just a symptom of a disease that is deep-rooted. When a man has a fever, it is said that he is "down with fever". Fever itself is taken for the disease. But in reality, fever is a symptom, an indication of some deep disorder in the physiology of the man who is running a temperature. Similarly, corruption is a symptom of a social disease – poverty. But the politician and the priest believe that corruption can be ended without caring for production and population control."

If we ask the enlightened masters, they have a different take on it. Osho cites a story of the Chinese master Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism. Lao Tzu was made the chief justice of the Supreme Court of China. He pleaded with the emperor that he is not the right man. But the emperor knew that Lao Tzu was the wisest man alive, so he wanted to benefit from his consciousness.

Lao Tzu said, “My judgment will come from my wisdom. And your judgments cannot be adjusted to my judgments.” But the emperor was stubborn. The first case came: a thief was caught red-handed in the richest man's house. Lao Tzu listened to both sides, pondered for a moment and gave his verdict, "Both of you, you and the man whose house you have been stealing from, are criminals. The rich man has collected so much money, that almost fifty percent

of the wealth of the city is in his possession. This situation creates the possibility of stealing. This thief is a victim; in fact, you are the criminal. But I will be very equal: six months of jail for both." The emperor said, "This is a very strange judgment."

Lao Tzu said, "It is not. If people were living in harmony with nature if people were compassionate to each other if they felt a certain brotherhood with each other, how could there be rich people and poor people? There should only be people." This is the guideline against the corruption (Palmar, 2021).

Mahatma Gandhi

Father of Indian Nationality Mahatmagandhi was the sublime freedom fighter. Gandhian ideology otherwise if talk of his ideology but adopt a highly individualistic approach without caring for others then we are doing sin in which is exhibited in a high level of corruption, scams and scandals, economic inequalities. India should learn to live with a moderate growth rate but with lower corruption, inequalities, inflation, and crime. It is seen that a high level of growth is followed by more corruption. As wants are unlimited Gandhian Philosophy endorses self-control and limitation of desires which is in turn based on Hindu Philosophy as the saying goes "Santosham Parmam Sukham" (Badal, 2020). Thus according to Hindu as well as the Gandhian notion spirituality is the panacea of corruption.

Jiddu Krishnamurti

"Corruption is inside in your heart, in your brain". If you are merely seeking success, money, money, money, power, position, and status, then you are beginning with corruption. You might be poor, be poor who cares. Don't be corrupt; it doesn't matter if you die for it. Jiddu Krishnamurti is acknowledged as a foremost spiritual educator in India as well as in other parts of the world including Britain and the USA. His public talks inspired numerous people. An eminent philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti proposed a solution to the crisis of violence. According to him, education can bring change to the violent nature of the inner man thus only spirituality solves the problem. The mystic and thinker Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986) engaged—from 1948 to 1985, a year before his death—in numerous dialogues (Tubaly, 2022).

Prithivi Narayan Shah

Value of Justice and Corruption Control: Celestial Advice (Dibbaya-Upadesh) -Prithivi Narayan Shah, The (then) Great King of Nepal has given some important notes on corruption. Then, justice should be on the top priority of the King. Never allow injustice in the country. Persons, who give and take bribes both of them corrupt justice. It is not considered a sin to confiscate all the property and even execute him for such a crime. They are the big enemies of the King. The Divyopadesh of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder king of the unified Nepal, explains about necessity of controlling corruption. He states that both bribe receiver and bribe offeror are enemies of the nation (Basnet, 2022). Taking and receiving bribe corrupts the justice system.

According to him, “It is not considered sin to confiscate all the property and even execute him [her] for such crime. A document with divine advices provided by the founder king of the modern Nepal. He died at the age of 52 (DoB: AD 1723 and DoD: AD 1755).

Conclusion

This viewpoints paper comes to the conclusion that life is just a Leela (play) and we are mere actors. This understanding will develop a non-serious attitude in life, towards life. We won't waste our limited valuable time and energy in accumulating wealth, success, fame by corrupting our souls. Which is all nonsense anyhow, because we are all going to die. We are just visitors to the planet earth, we come with certain visa and need to go back to the source from where we came, leaving the world more beautiful and corruption-free than we had found it when we were born. The spiritual saying of Gandhi- *if we want to change the world, we must start the anti-corruption action from within* (BraintQuote.com) and Osho- *no need for you to change the world; just change yourself and become new kind of human being* (Osho,1984), also indicates sans importance of spirituality. An individual having spiritual insights can understand the simple fact about life that nothing in this temporary life is permanent. All in all, it is the spirituality that makes a man human have peace in mind, compassion in the heart and thoughtful life. Therefore, the development of spiritual insight in every individual is necessary. Spirituality can give births incorruptible and new kinds of human beings who can play a transformative role against corruption and poor governance.

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