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## **PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY : ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND CORRUPTION**

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### **Abstract**

In many democracies far-reaching administrative reforms have failed to materialize. Desire to maintain the *status quo* by both politicians in power and senior civil servants, independent bases of bureaucratic power, increasing scope of bureaucratic intervention in the daily lives of citizens, organized resistance with the civil service and lack of interest of civil society have contributed in varying degrees to the non-implementation of reform measure. Corruption in different forms is prevalent in democratic countries. The nature and extent of corruption is causing many dangers to democratic systems. Consequences of failed reform efforts and prevalence of wide-ranging corruption have led to decreasing citizen interest in the affairs of the polity and the dominance of the state by few.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Democracy, as a word, was first mentioned by the Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century BC to mean 'the people to rule' (Holden 1988:5). Historically, it has been used both as an ideal state and a practical form of government (Catt 1999:14). Since that time, the word has been defined and interpreted variously by

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scholars and statesmen alike. Naturally, the meaning of democracy during the historical evolution also changed. It has been stated that the usage of the term until the eighteenth century was restricted to what may be termed in today's parlance as direct democracy. But now there is a broad agreement as to what democracy entails. These are representative government, party competition, the secret ballot, individual rights and freedoms (Schlesinger, Jr. 1997:4). It is also understood that liberty and equality are basic ingredients on which a democratic system stands.

During last four decades, a trend has been noticed among scholars whose interests lie in studying democracies in various cultures. This concerns identifying certain preconditions for democracy to work. These preconditions include economic, social and political variables. According to Sancton, many political scientists agree that a fairly high level of economic development, a strong middle class, a tradition of tolerance and respect for the individual, the presence of independent social groups and institutions, a market-oriented economy and the existence of élites willing to give up power, if needed, are necessary for a democratic system to operate effectively (Sancton 1987 as quoted in Vanhanen 1997:11). Both Downs and Dahl mention detailed conditions for a political system to be called democratic. These conditions can also form ingredients to a definition of democracy. For Downs, the variables that need to be present in a democratic system are the following: a single party or coalition elected to run government; periodic elections; franchise for all permanent residents; one person one vote; formation of the government by the party or coalition with a majority of votes until the next election; losing parties accepting the election results; ruling regime not restricting activities of opposition; and at least two parties competing in elections (Downs

1957:23-24). Dahl emphasizes on five criteria by which a system can be judged whether it is democratic or not. These are : voting quality, effective participation, enlightened understanding, and control of the agenda and inclusion (Dahl 1989). Dahl coined the term polyarchy to indicate a form of democracy that is achievable, and is premised on central ideas of sovereignty and participation.

In recent years, there is a tendency among scholars of democracy studies to devise measures to rank the extent of democracy in a particular country or countries. These measures are arrived at by isolating key components and based upon ideas about core theoretical aspects of democracy (Catt 1999:119). In a recent study Vanhanen constructed numeric measurements scale based upon ideas of competition and extent of popular participation (Vanhanen 1997:34).

Another issue that has not been adequately addressed in democracy studies is the relationship between democracy and democratization. Pateman notes that democracy as a political method or institutional arrangement has been separated from democratization, a social and political process (Pateman 1996:7). For such separation obscures mutual interrelationships between political institutions and social conditions, belief system and human capacities, and in the process four important questions are ignored. The first one concerns the attraction of the political method and its associated political liberties. The second question is about the character of democratization in terms of whether it should go beyond basic civil, political and electoral institutions, about the extent and character of the rights it should include and about the form of citizenship involved (Pateman 1996:7). The third question concerns a paradox about democratization. Though the promise of democratization is considered universal, yet only residents of a

particular state can enjoy citizenship and rights. The last question is about the actual operation of the democratic political method keeping in mind the presence of many complex conditions for satisfactory the performance of democratic institutions.

At another level, it has been argued that 'democracy is flourishing (but) constitutional liberalism is not' (Zakaria 1997:23). Zakaria, after analyzing several surveys of the Freedom House, reaches the conclusion that half of the 'democratizing' countries in the world today are, in fact, what he calls 'illiberal democracies'. He makes a case that only holding competitive multiparty elections and ensuring increased public participation in politics is not enough. Rather, it is important to discern whether a country guarantees an individual's social, political, economic and religious rights (Zakaria 1997:25). It is, therefore, not surprising, that though 120 out of 190 countries claim to have democracies, Freedom House's ranking counts only 86 as democracies, as citizens in the rest 34 counties are far from free in the true sense of the word (*The Economist*, 24 June 2000:17).

The review of trends in democracy studies makes it evident that present day democracies are plagued with so many maladies at different levels. The paper analyses the problems of democracy from administrative reform and corruption perspectives. The purpose here is to discern why administrative reforms fail and present the extent and implications of cancerous spread of corruption in democracy.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND DEMOCRACY

In terms of goals and outputs there are similarities between administrative reform and democracy. Both purport to achieve accountability and transparency in public activities and ensure good

life for citizens. One can assume then that a democratic system is conducive to usher in fundamental changes in the public service. But this may not always be the case. But before embarking upon such a discussion, it may be pertinent to deliberate upon what is meant by administrative reform, as many definitions of the term are available.

The recent trend is to subsume the term administrative reform within that of public sector reform presumably to give it a wider coverage. In the discussion that follows administrative reform will not necessarily mean and include public sector reform. During the 1980s in the advanced capitalist democracies, primarily as a response to the public sector expansion, the public sector reform move began (Lane 1997:2). Though three ideas, namely, deregulation, marketization and privatization(DMP), have had significant influence in shaping public sector reform, it is now accepted that the realities are far more diverse (Lane 1997:1). There is a need to incorporate within the DMP framework concerns about efficiency and fairness. Efficiency includes both productivity and effectiveness. Fairness entails new forms of public intervention in society looking for better public accountability and the promotion of individual or group justice in the form of fairness (Lane 1997:6).

Administrative reform, in this context, includes the core public sector usually identified with the public or civil service that deals with the administrative side of the government, of the public sector, of public administration, organization and management, that is, with getting things done that have been politically determined (Caiden 1991a:11). The importance of administrative reform can be readily understood from the fact that other far-reaching changes in the political, economic and institutional spheres may not succeed without it though administrative reform, in no way, can substitute political, economic and institutional reform (Caiden 1991a:11).

Administrative reform is closely linked with other terms, like innovation, change and resistance. Since its introduction in the literature in the late 1960s, administrative reform has proved to be a viable tool as well as a strategy to bring about major changes in entrenched bureaucracies. Caiden defined it more than thirty years ago as 'the artificial inducement of administrative transformation against resistance' (Caiden 1969:65). Much later he termed administrative reform as 'the induced systemic improvement of public sector operational performance' (Caiden 1991a:1). In between, other scholars provided important inputs by defining the term and in the process, contributed to clarification of its meaning. For Lee, it is "an effort to apply new ideas and combination of ideas to administrative system with a conscious view to improving the system for positive goals of development" (1970:7). For Abueva, administrative reform is "essentially a deliberate attempt to use power, authority and influence to change the goals, structure or procedures of the bureaucracy, and therefore, to alter the behaviour of its personnel" (1970:22). Administrative reform, to Dror, is directed to change the main features of an administrative system (1976). Quah defines administrative reform as "a deliberate attempt to change both the structure and procedure of public bureaucracy and attitudes and behaviours of the public bureaucrats involved to promote organizational effectiveness and attain national development goals" (1981:44). After a survey of representative definitions above, the following definition is adopted. Administrative reform here means "those efforts which call for or lead to major changes in the bureaucratic system of a country intended to transform the existing and established practices, behaviours and structures within it" (Khan 1980:57).

Question may now be raised more specifically as to why administrative reform is essential for democracy. A response to such

a question requires looking into the goals of administrative reform. According to one interpretation, the benefits of administrative reform can be varied and broad covering national and international spheres. These are:

Reduced human suffering, misery, pain, hunger and poverty; prevention of wars, physical violence, needless destruction of the life and property; conservation of nonreplicable natural resources and preservation of unique cultural amenities; protection of individual rights and liberties; enhancement of life opportunities and the quality of life, social justice and equity; reduction of unused and underutilized productive capacity, waste, pollution, preventable deaths, overcrowding; and elimination of artificial barriers among peoples (Caiden 1991a:98).

It would appear that major administrative reform measures must be implemented in right earnest to further consolidate and strengthen a democratic system in light of the benefits to be reaped by citizens. But the experiences of many democratic counties in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East show stiff and organized resistance to major administrative reform measures resulting in failure of such efforts. The experiences of the South Asian countries clearly demonstrate the difficulties of implementing far-reaching administrative reform measures.

Excepting Pakistan and Bhutan, all other South Asian counties e.g., Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lankas and Nepal have democratic systems in operation. Of these, India has been a democracy for the last fifty years-right from independence in 1947. Since 1990, the Nepalese governance system has been changed from a monarchical one to a parliamentary system. Bangladesh, though began its journey at independence in December 1971 as a democracy, had to suffer nearly two decades due to imposition of one-party rule and two successive military governments. A mass

upheaval buttressed by sustained anti-autocracy movement led to the establishment of a democratic government in early 1991. Though military took over state power in Pakistan in late 1999 keeping in line with earlier tradition of repeated military intervention in politics, Pakistan had three democratic governments in between. Sri Lanka opted for a democratic political system since gaining independence in 1949. The Maldives, an island state, which gained independence in 1965 claims to have a competitive electoral system within one-party framework. Excepting Nepal, which remained independent throughout, all the other countries were colonized by Britain. So British influence in politics and administration in South Asia still remains considerable.

In all the South Asian countries, excepting the Maldives, a number of reform bodies were appointed by governments with the objective to study different aspects of the civil services and recommend necessary changes. In all cases these bodies known either as committees or commissions spent considerable amount of public resources to accomplish their assigned tasks. But in almost all cases, major recommendations of such bodies have not been acted upon (Khan, 1998). The discussion that follows elaborates the reasons for non-implementation of major administrative reform proposals in South Asian democracies.

### **Politician-Senior Civil Servant Nexus in Misgovernance**

Neither the politician in power nor permanent senior generalist civil servants are interested to initiate far-reaching administrative reform measures. Both gain by continuation of the *status quo*. Politicization, corruption, mismanagement, inefficiency are some of the consequences of maintaining the *status quo*. In Bangladesh, major reform initiatives have been repeatedly blocked by senior civil



servants, with politicians limiting their role to pontification only (Khan 1998). In India, civil services got increasingly politicized because political bosses wanted it and partly because civil servants themselves sought illegitimate favours from the politicians resulting in a gradual decline in the quality, efficiency and integrity of services even at the highest level (Kashyap 2000:139). Naturally, civil service careers, promotions, postings, and job security all have become part of the system of distribution of spoils and patronage or outright linked to the price tag (Kashyap 2000:139). In Sri Lanka, politicization of civil services led to corruption throughout the administrative system and contributed to overstaffing and inefficiency in the public sector (Kashyap 2000:131). In Pakistan, the situation is no better. Politicization of services over the years has bred corruption among both civil servants and politicians and contributed to a demoralized and humiliated public sector.

### **Reality of Bureaucratic Power**

Caiden (1997a:38-39) forcefully argues and with justification, that public bureaucracy (civil service) has many bases for its own independent political power, i.e. resources, expertise, monopoly of legitimate coercive power, status, discretionary power, confidential information, strategic position and reputation. All these bases coupled with weaknesses of other political institutions and low caliber of politicians in many countries enable senior civil servants holding key positions to effectively oppose and frustrate any meaningful reform moves. Over dependence of political leaders on civil servants especially on the senior ones results in the inability of the former to distinguish between appropriate and motivated policy advice and input of the latter. Also the growing tendency of political leaders to utilize civil servants in injudicious and illegal manner also

allows civil servants at all levels to develop a contempt for the political leadership and a process is initiated where the former obtain undue favour from the latter.

### **Sheer Weight of Bureaucratic Inertia**

In India, like other countries in the region, scope of intervention of the civil service has expanded during last few decades as a result of governmental expansion into economic and social spheres of the society (Thakur 1995:180). Expansion of governmental activities into newer areas has brought in its wake more complication in terms of laws, rules and procedures, and made the entire system more cumbersome in terms of more organizations, more people and steep chain of command. But administrative reform measures intended to overcome these problems have received either no support or meager support from those who matter in the bureaucratic hierarchy in all the South Asian countries. Civil servants, like their political counterparts, prefer nothing better than creating new administrative units and tiers ostensibly to serve the public better; but in reality, these are intended to extend further the zone of influence of senior civil servants and ruling party's influential ministers.

### **Resistance from Within**

Resistance to major administrative reforms in all the South Asian countries have been led and orchestrated by senior generalist civil servants. The rationale behind such action is the fear of the unknown and the prospect of losing their privileged positions within the civil service system of respective countries (Khan 1998). These high-ranking civil servants occupy not only key positions within the civil service but they invariably with few exceptions, happen to chair and man reform bodies. Using such privileged positions, they come up with lot of new reform ideas mostly verbatim copies of what worked

in advanced western countries and in more developed South East Asian nations after visiting such countries at either governments' expenses or donors' costs. The other members of such committees/commissions are carefully chosen so that their opinions, if they have any, coincide with serving and retired civil servants in such bodies. Interesting phase unfolds when it comes to implementation of such new reform proposals. Review committees are set up again with senior civil servants to study the feasibility of recommended reform proposals. No wonder these committees recommend implementation of minor proposals, and major proposals are shelved with such excuses as lack of funds, procedural complexities and shortage of appropriate personnel. In the process, major reform proposals are ignored and the civil services remain virtually unchanged.

### **Lack of Interest of the Civil Society**

Civil service reform is not a priority area for civil society in any of the South Asian countries. Naturally, no reform movement activity involving citizens to redress the maladies in the civil services outside established institutional framework is seen. So there is hardly any pressure either on politicians in power or senior civil servants to give serious and sustained attention to civil service reform and produce desired result.

### **DEMOCRACY AND CORRUPTION**

Corruption, though has received increasing attention in last few decades, is as old as human civilization. Bribery can be found among the Jews, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Greeks and the Romans if one analyses penal codes of ancient civilizations (Thakur 1979:7). Large-scale corruption significantly influenced public life in ancient India (Thakur 1979:12; Padhay 1986: 26). If corruption has such

deep roots in the past, then why is this surge of interest and concern with corruption at present time? There are a number of reasons for this. First, corruption is endemic and can be found in almost all countries of the world irrespective of level of development, political system in operation and the cultural context. The nature and extent of corruption, however, varies. Harris-White and White argue that corruption is entrenched in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, prevalent in the newly-industrialized countries (NICs) of South East Asia, touched highest level of political office in Latin American countries and has reached quickly frightening heights in former Soviet Union and China (Harris-White and White 1996:1). Second, in a recent seminar organized by the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management on "Just and Honest Government: International Experience" senior government officials from ten Commonwealth countries reached the conclusion that corruption leads to impoverished state, the poor being deprived of much needed services. Besides, an undermining of the legitimacy of political leadership undercuts the trust of citizens in government; and erodes the support for and respectability of the public sector (Mason 2000:4-5). Third, corruption has an adverse impact on economic growth. Several cross-country empirical studies have established the negative impact of corruption on investment, growth and productivity (World Bank 2000:7). Corruption also decreases the efficiency on which an economy stands (HDC 1999:97).

### **Defining Corruption**

Despite growing interest in studying corruption, defining it to every body's satisfaction has not yet been possible. This is primarily because corruption is a multi-dimensional concept covering social, political, legal and economic aspects in a society. Definitions of corruption either exclusively focus on one of the aspects or attempt

to highlight in an insufficient manner some of the aspects. Approaches to corruption can be categorized under five groups: public interest centered, market centered, public office centered, public opinion centered and legalistic (Khan 1997:3). Public interest centered scholars view corruption as injurious or destructive of public interest (Rogow and Laswell 1970:54). The proponents of market centered approach suggest that norms moulding public have moved away from a mandatory pricing model to a free-market model, therefore, significantly altering the nature of corruption (Tilman 1970:62-64). For public office centered enthusiasts, misuse of public office by incumbents for private gain is corruption (Theobald 1990:2). Emphasis is on various perspectives of public opinion about the conduct of politicians, government and probity of public servants for those who adhere to public office opinion centered approach (Leys 1970:31-37). Still others look at corruption from a legal perspective in view of the problems faced in ascertaining rules and norms that govern public interest, behaviour and authority (Scott 1972).

The five approaches outlined above shed considerable light on the nature of corruption but are inadequate in terms of understanding the meaning of the term. Some divergent views have emerged in recent years as to what is corruption. These views have come from moralists, functionalists, social "censurists and social construction realists (Khan 1997:4). For moralists, 'corruption is an immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority' (Gould 1991:468). Nye, who subscribes to this view, depicts corruption as "a behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains, or violates rules against the

exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence” (Nye 1979:417). The functionalists judge corruption from the role it plays in socio-economic development. Functionalists claim that corruption flourishes as a substitute for the market system; offers an acceptable alternative to violence; and increases public participation in public policy (Leff 1979; Gould 1980). To understand corruption, proponents of social censure argue, one needs to understand the capacity of the state to produce a particular form of social relations. Such a view shifts the theoretical emphasis on interrelationship between law, ideologies and political economy (Lo 1993:5). Social construction reality perceives corruption as a problematic and various actors involved in it can be studied by relating them to contextual information on their social positions, interests, stake in the system and on the political, economic and social conditions within which they function (Pavorala 1996:25).

In light of the foregoing discussions on the approaches and views on corruption, two definitions may prove useful here. For Caiden, corruption includes ‘abuse of authority, bribery, favoritism, extortion, fraud, patronage, theft, deceit, malfeasance and illegality’ (1991b). According to a report of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), corruption refers to “use of one’s official position for personal and group gain and includes unethical actions like bribery, nepotism, patronage, conflict of interest, divided loyalty, influence-peddling, moonlighting, misuse or stealing of government property, selling of favours, receiving kickbacks, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, misappropriation, under or over-invoicing, court tampering, phony travel and administrative documents and use of regulation as bureaucratic capital” (AAPAM, 1991). In the light of the two definitions above, corruption in this context means ‘the behavior of (elected and appointed) public officials which diverges from the

formal components – the duties and powers, rights and obligations – of a public role to seek private gain’ (Kramer 1997).

### **Corruption Scenario in Democracies**

Ideally, corruption and democratic system should not co-exist as the former over a period of time profoundly influences in the negative manner the character and nature of the latter. There are many dangers to democracy from corruption (Caiden 1997b:19-20; Midlasky 1997:323–324). First, continued corruption may fuel and perpetuate discontent and resentment among citizens and force them to look for and live with an alternative form of government. Second, shameless selling of politics in many democratic countries leads to distortion of policies and contributes to transforming the political playing field even more uneven. Third, corruption if unchecked, only spreads and engulfs other institutions and sectors including public administration and business. Fourth, though corrupt leaders can be thrown out of office in a democracy, the situation changes drastically if the culture of corruption is widespread in it. Then the possibility remains that the incumbent corrupt leader is to be replaced by another who is equally corrupt. Finally, widespread cooperation among different segments within the society is needed for appropriate functioning of a democracy. But under conditions of widespread corruption diminution of cooperation is likely as in such a situation only the corrupted would cooperate with each other as long as mutual benefits persist.

Considerable evidence is there to indicate that corruption not only exists in democracies but also is flourishing in many cases. In both Thailand and the Philippines, past authoritarian regimes were extremely corrupt, democratization failed to reduce the scale of corruption but only ‘decentered’ it from the central elite of the

ancient regime to local bosses who are able to select their own national politicians and through them control the bureaucracy (Sidel 1996). In Latin American countries, the process of democratization may have made corruption more pronounced and efforts to reduce corruption will not succeed unless democracy significantly deepens (Little 1996). Two reports on Latin American countries released in early Summer 2000 show that only 37% of the sample population were content with the way democracy works in practice. Latin America ranks above only Africa in terms of the rule of law and the prevalence of corruption (*The Economist*, 13 May 2000). Naturally, roughly two out of three have little or no trust in their politicians, parties, congresses, police or judiciaries (*The Economist*, 13 May 2000). In South Korea, corruption continues unabated because democratization and liberalization are in their infancy and it will take literally very long period of reform for decades-old malpractice to be reversed (Kong 1996:52). In India, political actors of all shades including ministers, legislators, office bearers of political parties and other office holders are involved in corruption (Padhay 1986). Corruption has been and continues to be rampant in Bangladesh involving politicians, civil servants and businessmen. Payoff benefits from corrupt practices include money, jobs, luxury gifts, building supplies, overseas travel and the payment of foreign tuition bills, foreign medical bills, overseas hotel and restaurant bills and personal liabilities (Kochanek 1993:258). In African democracies, election rigging and brigandage, violence and election annulment are common practices (Adejumobi 2000:59). These symptoms of corruption have led Adejumobi to conclude that elections in their current form in most Africa states appear to be a fading shadow of democracy (2000:59). Politicians in established democracies have not been immune from corruption. Rather money related scandals



continue to shake European democracies (*The Economist*, 29 January-4 February 2000:59-60). Party finance scandal in Germany has disgraced once powerful Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Belgian politicians some years ago took vast kickbacks on arms deal. Both Italy and Greece are riddled with corruption. Turkey is not far behind in corruption either. Spain's last socialist government lost in the election mostly as it was perceived to be corrupt. During the past decade in France 30 ministers, heads of top companies and big city mayors have been convicted of corruption. In Italy and Columbia, black money circulating in politics has far out-weighed those political expenditures and party income that are formally declared (Burnell 1998:10). Vote-buying influence of black money, criminalisation of political sphere have become regular features in many South Asian democracies. Grand corruption which is misuse of power by heads of state, ministers and top officials for private profit is rampant in South Asia and Africa (HDC 1999:105).

## CONCLUSION

There is little disagreement about democracy as the most suitable form of governance. But problems surface when one looks at how democracy operates in practice. The substance of democracy is inherently more important than mere form. As has been observed appropriately, "formal democracy can conceal huge variations in democratic substance, ranging from virtual autocracy through oligarchy to democracy ... these variations to be particularly wide in a developing world which is increasingly heterogeneous in socioeconomic terms" ( Luckham and White 1996:4 ). So in many cases, democratic regimes in developing countries through their actions have hindered democratic development. Pinkney after surveying a wide range of cases in the Third World countries,

suggests that the governments “have done more to satisfy civil and military élites and foreign financiers than the masses” (1993:164). It is no wonder that “the rise and fall of democracy in Latin America has corresponded less to the whims of the voting majority than to the concerted opposition of business and military elites” (Remmer 1990:335). So mere presence of some form of liberal democracy involving open political competition within a multi-party framework with civil and political rights ensured by law is not enough. As has been pointed out that “characteristic virtues of democratic governance – transparency, responsiveness, accountability, official propriety and tolerance cannot be achieved without high levels of public awareness and participation” (Luckham and White 1996:3). Voting trends even in the advanced Western democracies in major elections is not satisfactory. Most citizens choose to stay away from polling booths. Big business and corporate financing dominate elections. Corporate financing of increasingly costly electoral campaigns in almost all democratic countries is an important indicator of economic influence on political processes (Girling 1997:17). Corporate financing is a major source of political corruption in many countries. Political funding, in general, contributes to influence-peddling. The experiences of Western democracies indicate that due to extreme pressure on political funding, the process deteriorates into corruption (Ferdinand 1998:200). Eliminating political corruption has been attempted in many Western countries with public financing of electoral campaigns. But public financing has not been effective in curbing corruption in established democracies (Alexander and Shiratori 1994:3).

The problems of democracy is much deep rooted and not amenable to solutions which intend only to democratize political

institutions as has been the case in Western countries. Scholars like Held raises the pertinent issue of democratizing state institutions, executive to branches of civil service that thrive on secrecy and control of the means of coercion. These agencies develop their own momentum and interests which may be in conflict with the requirements of democratic public life, i.e, open debate, access to power centers and participation (Held 1987:284).

Participation of ordinary citizens in the democratic process is compromised by prevalence of black money, dominance of muscle power, practice of rigging and annulment of elections and payment of donations by powerful interest groups, like big business and organized labour. Also continuation with an outdated, overstaffed, inefficient and corrupt civil service not only harasses and frustrates citizens but also complicates proper functioning of a democratic system. Continued corruption and non-implementation of major administrative reforms raise question marks about the viability and utility of democracy.

The question may be raised as to whether democracy matters. Citizens are intimidated and cheated everyday in many democratic countries in one form or another by both appointed and elected officials at will and with impunity. Businessmen suffer, as contracts are not awarded on the basis of the merit of the case. Corruption has negative impact on investment and contributes to lower growth rate. Criminalization of politics, due to the entrenched and widespread corruption in the political process, has to be tolerated, if not wholeheartedly accepted in many democracies. Electoral systems are manipulated in favour of the rich and powerful, especially those belonging to the ruling party or coalition parties in power. No doubt, average voter is offended by blatant and sometimes, open manipulation of the electoral system but he/she can do very little.

Independent poll monitoring reports on massive irregularities are usually ignored. Recourse to judiciary usually brings no immediate relief, as it mostly resorts to cautious policy, thereby, delaying and denying justice to the aggrieved. Failures to institutionalize far-reaching administrative reforms have given further impetus to corruption. Corruption has become the order of the day. Cleaning the political process, administration and economy of corrupt practices and influences may be important to those who suffer but of little significance to elite who gain. It would appear that reform and probity have taken backseats in many democracies throughout the world.

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