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Erosion of values and corruption in administration

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Abstract : *The fabric of society is held together by the standards of morality which we maintain and practice. Values are our personal set of beliefs about what is important, unimportant, right, wrong, good and bad. Values are kind of map in our minds of how things are or should be. Nowadays, the changing perception of life and society due to rapid industrialization and growing materialism is resulting in value erosion. This process of continuous value erosion is hampering every sphere of individual's life and our administration, which is a basic requirement for peace and development of any society, is greatly affected by the*

problem of corruption having value erosion as its root cause. So, this project was undertaken to find out that how much the people of Patna are aware about this problem.

The decreasing faith in values and the lack of societal norms among the administrators is leading to administrative inefficiency and corruption. Corruption in administration basically means the misuse of power by governmental officials for certain illegitimate private gains. On analyzing the situation during the course of research over this subject, we found that the main reason for rampant corruption in administration is absence of strict enforcement of accountability on the part of the administrators and it was seen that their personal values have an immense impact on their way of functioning.

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Introduction :

Values are the abstract ideals which make a man what they are as value represents a person's belief about ideal mode of conduct. Acquiring values is a lifelong process which continues from birth till death. These values lead man from the path of darkness to light, from death to immortality. The fabric of society is held together by the standards of morality which we maintain and practice. The real asset of a nation is not its natural resources but people with right values. In the contemporary period, values are declining at a fast pace. A prominent thinker aptly summed up the situation that, earlier, people would say, how can we speak a lie, we have a family to look after. Today they say how can we speak the truth, we have a family to support. Indeed, erosion of values has become the concern of today's society. Human beings are more or less similar in every generation; it is probably the increasing stress, fast pace of life, keen competition and over vaulting ambition to achieve too much in too little time that has made today's man seemingly less principled than his ancestors. The greatest tragedy of modern world is that it has given us enough to live with but nothing to live for. 'Today our need for self preservation and material gains take precedence over concern for society and the community'; says Aura Riana, freelance writer. While trying to find that how much the new family system is responsible for increasing the pace of erosion of values, it was seen that breaking up of joint families into nuclear families, most homes do not have the tradition of values to give to today's generation. Values are inducted by mother, who is usually not available to the child for major part of the day. It is rightly remarked that the erosion of moral values also erode the strength of our society. Arthur Witt remarked that over the past two decades, we have clearly seen an erosion of ethical values.

As an outcome of value erosion the administrative efficiency is getting hampered because absence of societal values among the administrators leads to the problem of corruption. Corruption in administration basically means the misuse of power by government officials for certain illegitimate private gains. The main reason for rampant corruption in administration is absence of strict enforcement of accountability. One of the main attributes of democratic government is an accountable and value laden administration. In the country's constitution there is a clear provision for delegating authority in all layers of administration to the elected representatives as spelt out by legal provisions. Despite constitutional compulsions, participation of the people in administration could not yet be ensured due to the fact that there is a section of people who want to maintain the status quo to serve their own interest. As per the Preamble of the constitution, the people are supposed to be the source of all powers but instead of this, a top heavy bureaucracy with its bastion at the secretariat has become the source of all powers. This centralized administration has established absolute authority over all aspects of the state i.e. from policy formulation to program implementation. Administration has therefore become a bastion of corruption in the absence of transparency and accountability. Although the task of controlling corruption has been reposed on bodies like the Central Vigilance Commission, CBI etc, it has not yet been placed under an independent constitutional authority. Therefore, many of these organizations themselves get involved in corrupt practices. The centralized administration is responsible for excessive bureaucracy, delay in decision making and lack of benefits to the people. Absence of powerful local government is one of the major causes of increasing trend of corruption in country. The pace of work in public administration has become almost stagnant. The people have to face innumerable problems and undergo untold

sufferings due to corruption among the public officials. Good governance has become almost impossible as a result of all pervasive impact of corruption. To fight corruption, a sound base of good governance and national consensus must be built.

By analyzing the significance of this aspect of Indian administration, it was found imperative to undertake a project work to find out its implications in Indian society and to gather public opinion in this regard.

Objectives :

The specific objectives of the study included the following:-

- To find out the basic causes responsible for corruption in administration.
- To examine the correlation between societal values and the level of corruption.
- To find out the effects of corruption on administrative efficiency.
- To suggest measures for combating this problem in future.

Hypotheses :

The hypothesis was as follows:-

- (i) Change in value structure of the society promotes corruption in administration .
- (ii) Administrative efficiency is determined by the level of personal values possessed by the administrators themselves .

Methodology :

- **Sample size and Sampling method** included almost 25 respondents from among the administrators especially the administrators of the Welfare Department. 25 respondents were also taken from among the common masses to know the public opinion.
- **Tools and Techniques for Data Collection:** Data was collected through Questionnaire Method. For this purpose, a Performa

containing 10-15 questions was prepared keeping in mind the issues relevant to the problem.

- **Method of Data Analysis :** To get the real picture we collected data through questionnaire and analyzed through tabulation and score method.

Findings :

After analyzing the situation and carrying research on this topic i.e. "Erosion of Values and Corruption in Administration", it was found that majority of the administrators, and 76% and 60% of common masses accepted the fact that Indian society is a value based society and it is largely governed by a large number of moral and ethical values. Personal values of the administrators affect their administrative activities to a large extent as we all know that personal values of any individual has an immense impact on his personality and so it was supported by 88% of the administrators and 60% of the common masses. Corruption is a day to day phenomena and it is rampant in India. Any level of administration is not free from this problem. 88% of the administrators and 90% of the common masses agreed that corruption is widely prevalent in India. The equation of corruption may be like this:-

$$C = A + M - T$$

Where C is Corruption, A is Authority, M is Monopoly and T is Transparency.

Lord Acton correctly remarked that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. About 68% of administrators and 32% of the common mass agreed that corruption is a relic of the past. Charles Caleb Cotton remarked that corruption is like a ball of snow, once it sets a rolling, it must increase. 88% of the administrators and 80% of the common masses believe that there is a constant erosion of values in Indian society. It was also supported by Arthur Witt who says "over the past two decades, we have clearly shown an erosion of ethical values."

Corruption is the greatest single bane of our society today. Vocationalisation/Commercialization of our education system has led to value erosion and increase of corrupt practices. About 56% of the administrators and 60% of the common masses supported this view because value based educational pattern is largely not followed in India. In character building value inculcation is perhaps the most meaningful necessity and it would be the best contribution we can make in curbing corruption to a great extent. During the research work we found that increasing consumerism and materialism increases erosion of values and thereby promotes corruption. About 80% of the administrators and 60% of the common masses supported this. Reorientation of the mental attitude of any individual has an important influence over his day to day activity or behaviour. Therefore this was accepted by 90% of the administrators and 60% of the common masses. Governmental measures are a necessary factor to minimize and curb corruption. This was supported by 68% of the administrators and 60% of common people.

Conclusion :

Value erosion can be stopped only by moulding the minds of the young. Building of such an attitude and a society which is based upon moral values depends on the will of the people both holding high offices and the ordinary folks without political or economical clout. Of course the values trickle down from the one who has cultivated and stored them in his/her personality. Thus, it is necessary and imperative that everyone struggles to imbibe and infuse values of selflessness, compassion, truthfulness and generosity in his character. This is essential because unless we see the values as personified in someone else, we do not understand its utility. We find that value based life is calm, pure and serene, without agitation and restlessness and to exhibit the beneficial impact of virtues on the individual and the society as a whole, it needs to

be represented in administration and in the working pattern of administrators.

Thus, inculcating values among new generation can solve a lot of problems relating to corruption and corrupt practices because value promotes transparency and only an accountable and transparent administration can help in bringing corruption to an end.

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