

ENDING CORRUPTION: TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY

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Abstract

Corruption and governance are the most critical of contemporary problems. While the problem of corruption remains significant, a narrowly deterrence-centric anti-corruption strategy has often proved ineffective. What is often overlooked in donor-driven initiatives is the need to mobilize a critical coalition of operational actors to delimit, if not eliminate corruption. The Government of Bangladesh is keen to develop a new approach in this regard in association with more stakeholders and victim of corruption.

But finding solutions which can stand the test of strategic promise and political intelligence has been less straightforward in combating corruption. Developing a meaningful discourse and design a collaborative strategy to combat this evil called corruption .and finding entry points in this regard is the challenge of the time.

Keywords: *Ending Corruption, Collaborative strategy*

Introduction

Corruption in its all shades and color is the illegal tool of accumulating illegal wealth depriving a person which creates inequality and social injustice. Corruption destroys social order, rule of law and all good governance efforts. Corruption and the corrupts are the enemies of the people and the society in any country. That is why fighting corruption and installing honesty is a pre condition for good governance for ensuring human rights, human dignity, equality and social justice and better business environment.

Holding the first position in Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 5 consecutive years has tarnished the image of Bangladesh, and in such a situation majority of the citizens did not know what to do and how to start a fight against this man made tool of exploitation called corruption. Conscious citizens attempted to raise voice against this evil through the media or different civil societies organizations. Under the prevailing circumstances everybody concerned with governance realizes the necessity of designing a collaborative strategy to limit this evil called corruption. The following nonviolent silent strategies may be used to curve down corrupt practices in every sector of Bangladesh.

Ending Corruption: Naming and shaming strategy

Naming and shaming can be a very effective tactic to eradicate corruption in any country. Even in developing countries, where corruption is accepted as a necessary evil, naming and shaming tactic has been effective in recent years. In India, high profile cases uncovered and actively reported by the citizen action group have led to disgraceful dismissals of high level government officials and even criminal action against public figures. No such example has been set by the political governments in Bangladesh in the past. But citizen action groups or the media demonstrated ability to generate outrage among the public that can be channeled productively to control and eradicate corruption. Nobody can undermine the role and power of media in the society for establishing good governance.

Ending Corruption: Creating awareness strategy among the Stakeholders

Everyday policy makers, professionals, business leaders, sociologist, economists and others independently generate amazing number of ideas and thoughts. The reasons that these ideas don't come to fruition is because like-minded reformers do seldom collaborate to bring changes. There are a lot of international and domestic organizations, NGOs, government agencies, opinion leaders and others – that are all individually working on tackling corruption in a piece-meal fashion. A more comprehensive approach to address corruption will be more

fruitful. Corruption can be marginalized if not eliminated if all stakeholders work together in a coordinated manner against corruption.

Ideas and thoughts are ineffective if not put to actions. Unless what is thought is acted upon, such thought has no value. What is important is the commitment of all the citizens – leaders of respective fields– to take on the challenge of ending corruption and to do one’s own part to address it in a collaborative manner. Corruption, as in all affairs in society may be viewed from the two sides: **a demand side** and **a supply side**. The **demand side** can only be curbed by reforms of institutions, strengthened enforcement of law by a transparent judiciary. As the owner of the country all citizens are affected by corruption everyday, and as such they should insist reforms of the legislative, executive and judicial organ of the country. The stake holders of a corruption free society should get united to raise voice against corruption to curve the **supply side**. Thus the citizens will have to participate in the battle against corruption and only moral support to the Anti Corruption Commission (**ACC**) is not enough to eliminate corruption.

Ending Corruption: Creating awareness among the Civil Society

Citizens face potential corruption practically at every level and every sector of life. It could be the local police, T.N.T, electricity and water authority, Municipal Corporation or the tax department. Government alone cannot succeed in combating corruption without the active participation of civil society and citizen action groups. Civil society is in the best position to articulate the grievances of the citizen and highlight priorities of action on corruption to governments. Civil society can serve many important roles–as observer, critic, analyst, campaigner, or protestor. It can create public awareness against corruption and mobilize citizens to fight against corruption in ways that governments cannot. Civil society can also play a strong role to organize campaigns against corruption.

Ending Corruption: Creating awareness among Chambers and Trade Bodies

As Civil society organizations, Citizens’ action groups, NGOs, media, and Chambers–can play the largest role in improving governance both in the public and private sector. Similarly **Chambers** and other **trade bodies** can be more active by organizing seminars, workshops, round tables to generate awareness against corruption and unethical business practice. Chambers, Trade Group or Apex bodies of business house can establish **anti corruption cell** headed by a vice president with adequate funds to establish liaison with media, anti corruption commission (ACC) and other government agencies to fight corruption and protect its members from extortion and corrupt claims. Mega chambers like **FBCCI or SAARC** Chamber should formulate code of conduct for their members and put pressure on the members for compliance. Awareness regarding code of conduct for members of chambers would have trickle down effect on smaller business enterprises and so on.

Ending Corruption: Creating awareness among Private Sector

The private sector can play a more active role in rooting out the **supply side** of corruption. It is painful that most businessman and citizens looks at corrupt practice as a system. According to unofficial estimates many business house just account for it on their books – as much as 10% – adding to the cost of doing business. Business leaders as well as the government should take initiatives so that local and foreign investors can set up business enterprise and function in Bangladesh without resorting to corruption and extortion. The Anti corruption commission (ACC) visibly started a crusade against corruption which may be looked upon as a proactive move towards corruption free governance. The present elected government should facilitate ACC to continue its task judiciously.

For eradicating corruptions the private sector must emphasize on internal controls and auditing mechanisms. Corporate bodies and business houses needs to set clear and enforceable policies against corrupt or unethical business practices. Business house

need to periodically train middle and senior management on business ethics to ensure that standards are institutionalized throughout the organization. Business houses should change their mind-set to prefer managers having comprehensive business education with emphasis on ethics. Any business managers can not afford to be unaware of global ethical standards for doing business in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

In a developing country for good governance the fight against corruption is not easy. In Bangladesh citizen recently started raising against corruption. It is expected the present elected government, patriot citizens and other stakeholders will be able to address the most difficult challenge – fighting corruption. Corruption is a tremendous deterrent to good governance and development, and its burden falls heaviest on the shoulders of the poor people. An effective Anti-Corruption Commission – with strong political backing, can become a credible tool to deter corruption. All concerned should help the ACC to be fully operative. If Bangladesh wants to establish corruption free business friendly environment, wants to become a country free of poverty and economically strong, where every citizen will enjoy his or her rights and a better quality life, ending corruption is the most important need. It is the responsibility of every stakeholder to respond to this need towards corruption free, transparent, participatory good governance ensuring equity and social justice.

No body will deny that, in Bangladesh in the past governance mechanism was far less then satisfactory. Many issues and problems were the barriers to ensure good governance, equity and social justice. Weak watchdog institutions, political interference in administration, nepotism, misuse of power, absence of rule of law, non-accountable and non-transparent governments etc. are the common features of our governance which needs to be addressed on urgent basis.

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