Paper   Contemporary Issues and Trends in Indian Politics

 Unit   : 1

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Political Corruption

Corruption in India is very rampant. It is one of the greatest roadblocks in the journey of development. There are political, economic, social, legal and historic dimensions of corruption.

1. **Political Aspect of Corruption**
    - India is a very large country in terms of geography and demography.

    -The nation is divided into 543 Lok Sabha constituencies. These constituencies are very large in population and territory.

    -No individual candidate of a constituency has the financial capacity to meet the cost of campaigning.

    -The political parties and candidates approach the industrialists for donation.

-Industrialists and rich people provide donation to all major political parties and candidates.

-Once these candidates get elected the MPs and MLAs are morally bound to support these election donors.

-This vicious cycle of corruption corrodes Indian democracy

2. **Economic Aspect of Corruption**

- In economic history of India we can see close linkages between corruption and economic policies.

- India followed mixed economy since Independence until 1991. The public sector was provided with the commanding heights of economy.

-There was a license system so that if any industrialist wants to start a project has to get a license from the Government.

-Hence he was forced to pay bribe to get the license.

- World Institutions like World Bank argued that economy should be deregulated to solve the corruption case.

3. **Bureaucracy and Corruption**

- In India Bureaucracy performs the functions of administration and development.

- IAS, IPS, IRS officers are officially in charge of handling thousands of crores while their salaries are in few thousands.

- As the great political strategist of ancient India Chanakkiya the honey hunter will be forced to lick his forehand.

- Cornwallis the Governor General of India in 1790s during the East India Company's rule in India introduced the Office of Collectors to tackle corruption.

-He was paid a handsome salary of Rs. 1500 per month in addition to 1% of revenue.

-This was to desist him from becoming corrupt.

- But there is a second argument that no amount of money can deter a person from becoming corrupt.

-Becoming corrupt is a matter of one's character (Character is life).

4. **Society and Corruption**

- Society is itself responsible for the prevalence of rampant corruption in India.

- We are bound by our social identities created by caste, region, language and religion.

-If a member of our caste or religion or language is caught and convicted under corruption charges, we out of social loyalties sympathise and defend that person.

- Thus our social mind set perpetuates corruption.

5. **Legal Dimensions of Corruption**

 - There are many laws against corruption like Prevention of Corruption Act

- There are many investigation agencies like CBI.

-But these laws and institutions suffer from shortcomings.

-People escape through these shortcomings.

6. **History and Corruption**

- Corruption is always present in the history and it will always be present in the future.

- Kautilya in his book Arthashastra has discussed about corruption

Criminalisation of Politics

-Criminalization of Politics is a major challenge to the democracy of India.

- In the beginning of 1950s and 1960s a nexus developed between criminals and politicians.

-It was a symbiotic relationship where criminals received help from politicians against police actions and politicians made use of the criminals to intimate opponents.

-Later the criminals themselves entered into politics.

- They became local leaders and gradually spread tentacles to the district, state and finally took over National politics.

-Criminalization of Politics and Politicisation of Crime are inter-related.

- In 1993 Mumbai city was subjected to serial bomb-blasts perpetrated by the under world.

-The union government appointed Vohra Committee to investigate the criminals-politician nexus.

-The committee on examining the background of this nexus recommended the following measures to combat criminalization of politics:

i.   The people must be made vigilant

ii. The press should take this issue seriously

iii. Political parties and leaders must actively refrain from encouraging this unholy nexus.

iv. New laws must be made and old laws must be strengthened to prevent Criminalization of politics.

v. Finally there shouldn't be any political interference in the functioning of institutions like CBI, Police, etc,.

Solution

-State funding of elections is advocated as a solution.

- It is practised in some of the countries like continental Europe.

- In late 1990s a committee headed by Indrajit Gupta examined the feasibility of state funding of elections

-The committee recommended that a sound strategy that does not support direct cash funding of elections.

-The funding should be through kind and not through cash.

-Only registered national and state political parties should be provided with state funding.

-There should be retrospective funding of new political parties and independent candidates if they get a certain percentage of votes.

Lokpal

-Lokpal means the defender of the People

- The name, Lokpal was created first by Dr. L.M.Singhvi in the early 1960s

-It is similar to the body of Ombudsman found in Scandinavian countries

- It is an anti corruption body

-There is a distinction between Lokpal and Lok Ayukta. The Lokpal possesses powers to enquire into corruption charges at the national level while the Lokayukta performs the SIMILAR function at the state level.

- It consists of a chair person and eight members

-Half of the members are judicial members who are or have been a Judge of the Supreme Court or a Chief Justice of a High Court

-The other half being non-judicial members are people of impeccable integrity and outstanding ability having special knowledge and expertise of not less than twenty-five years in the matters relating to

   a) anti-corruption policy,

   b) public administration,

   c) vigilance,

   d) finance including insurance and banking,

   e) law and management.

- Retired Supreme Court judge Pinaki Chandra Ghose is appointed as the first Lokpal of India by a committee consisting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Lok Sabha speaker Sumitra Mahajan IN 2019

-Jan Lokpal Movement was conducted by the Anna Hazare in 2011 that had created a huge awareness among the people about the Lokpal

- The Lokpal and Lokayukta are independent bodies like the Election Commission of India

Personality Cult in Indian Politics

- One of the conspicuous features of Indian politics is Personality Cult Phenomenon

- Both national politics and state politics exhibit personality cult

- The German Sociologist Max Weber described three kinds of leadership a) Traditional Leadership b) Rational Leadership c) Charismatic leadership

- The Charismatic Leadership is found in Indian democracy in abundance

- They evoke intense loyalty, devotion and dedication form their followers

- The followers are emotionally attached with their leaders. The death, illness, electoral defeat and even arrest of the leaders precipitates intense reaction

- Strikes, boycott, demonstrations, even suicides are committed by the followers
- There are many reasons advocated for the dominance of personality cult in Indian Politics
- Poverty
- Illiteracy
- Religion
- Caste
- Language
- Tribal Loyalty
- Regional Loyalty
- Development
- Identity Politics
- Popular Schemes

Political Dynasty

- Theoretically dynasty and democracy are dichotomous entities and identities

- But in Indian democracy dynasty is ubiquitous

- Politically influential families dominate politics in local, regional, state and union levels

- Almost all political parties demonstrate the presence of dynasty politics.

  -They normally differ only in degree and not in kind

- Nevertheless, some political parties are overwhelmed by Dynasty. The regional political parties, caste based political parties, Language based parties are more vulnerable to the dominance of family politics

- There are two kinds of status and role in any society

- Ascribed Status and Role is based on birth factor. The political power, social prestige and economic prosperity all are influenced by the accidental factor of birth

- On the contrary Achieved Status and Role depends on achievement and hard work of the individual. A person possesses political power, social standing and economic prosperity because of his own efforts

- In ideal and classical democracies achieved Status and Role are indispensable

- But in Indian democracy ascribed Status and Role play a paramount role in the success of individuals in politics, economy and society

- There are many dysfunctional implications arising from family dominated, controlled and operated parties and politics

- Merit and talent are sacrificed at the altar of family links and bonds

- Real leadership is not given a chance to blossom

- It leads to corruption

- It leads to the darkness of nepotism enveloping the entire landscape of democracy

- Economic development of the country is undermined

- National security is also threatened

- Dynasty politics had stultified the growth of institutionalization in our country