

Socio-anthropological Understanding of Corruption and Its Control

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Abstract

Corruption is the misuse of power to obtain an unlawful advantage which depends on the power of actors, the profiteers, initiators, mechanisms and society where it takes place. Level, colour and activities are prime basis of classification of corruption. Before emergence of modern political thought religions have predominance over the corruptive act. Power and authority to misuse the position for involving improper actions and mistreatment by the agent to principal considered as an interactional, deterioration in morality as a normative and class based domination as a structural approaches of corruption. Socio-anthropological aspect elaborates corruption in terms of social norms such as democratic, psychological, micro analysis of gender as well as religious which vary with the structure of society. Klitgaard provided both conceptual and anti-corruption related formula to understand and control corruption. Different school and scholars provided different ideas regarding causes and dimensions of corruption. It is considered that the best socio-anthropological mechanisms to control corruption would be the legal, behavioural, gender, religious and collective approach with the primary focus against chronic corruption and clanism. However, the global nature of corruption, anti-corruption actions either institutional or legal provisions are established in each democratic country. As the value of CPI of In case of Nepal both types of mechanisms are established to control corruptive offences, but the value of CPI is low. That's why the voice to control corruption differently, is raising now.

Keywords: Corruption, Social Norms, Dimension of Corruption, Anti-corruption Mechanisms

1. Background

The word "corruption" is derived from the Latin word *corruptio*, which is the translation of Greek word *phthorà* the opposite of *aphthorà*, related to permanence. Corruption is predominantly religious use before the emergence of modern political thought. After the emergence of modern political thought normative dimension was added in the conceptual aspect of corruption. So corruption is at least understood as political corruption now a days though it has a narrower focus. On the other hand, corruption is generally understood as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain on all areas of human life. Such abusive activity suggests that it is vital to understand for the people's well-being

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to understand difference in their attitude and performance. Following definitions and discussions make us clearer about socio-anthropological understanding of corruption, along with controlling methods/mechanisms globally and in Nepalese context.

According to Transparency International, corruption is often defined as the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. Similarly, Nye (1967) defines ‘corruption is such types of behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regarding (close family, personal, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private regarding influence’.

According to Staats, Corruption is a social problem found in various “degrees and forms in all but the most primitive societies”.

According to Klitgaard corruption can be represented by the following equation
$C = E + D - A$
Where, C = Corruption, E = Economic Rent, D = Discretion and A = Accountability.

Lascoumes and Nagels (2014), elaborated that corruption is understood in following three ways.

customary	when it is stable and recognized but non- written as are social norms.
regulatory/principle-based	when it is dictated by non-legal rules.
legal	when the norm is set out in a polity’s legal framework.

Corruption has emerged as a ubiquitous problem everywhere. Alatas (1990) termed it, as a trans-systemic issue affecting all social systems and classes, state organizations and situations, age groups and sexes of populations, at all times, constructed by specific traditions, values, norms and institutions. It focuses in particular, on the role of informal (social) and formal (institutional) norms in the description, explanation, and prediction along with combat to the corruptive act. In each society there are social rules and cultural codes that govern the way of corruption itself should, or does or take place. Social norms are cultural products including values, customs and traditions. Based on descriptive norms formal institutions are responsible to shape an individual’s basic knowledge of what others do in a formal way. But on the other hand injunctive norms may be social and informal related to what others think they should do. So the different perspectives about understanding and controlling mechanisms to the corruptive act is raising. Among them sociologists and anthropologists suggested to view and behave corruption socio-anthropologically.

Sociology is the science, which attempts interpretative understandings of social actions whether the action is deviant or not. It involves the study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies. If anthropology is concerned with understanding the rules and norms that govern social conduct, then a good way of exploring these codes is to examine instances where and how they are violated. It also deals with how people react to such transgressions and the strategies and tactics that actors use to negotiate between different norms and rules. Similarly, anthropologists focus on the language by

which (and through which) ideas about corruption are articulated. They also focus on the broader cultural contexts in which corruption and discourses of corruption take place. Anthropological view of corrupt act is partially based on strong private-public dichotomy. Anthropologists termed corruption as a language or a meta-language that is in everyday use of human beings. Public discussion on corruption provides opportunities for citizens to communicate anxieties, concerns and ideas about their society. Society is the union, the organization and the sum of formal relations where involvement is bound together in any kind of association and norms. We may generalize that socio-anthropological views about corruption is the exchange relation and act within the society, differentiation in human relation and violation of legal and moral systems of society.

2. Understanding about Corruption

The discussion about norms and understanding, approaches, types, dimensions, causes and controlling mechanisms of corruption socially and anthropologically is explained below.

2.1. Social Norms and Understanding of Corruption

According to Ostrom (2000) social norms are “shared understandings about actions that are obligatory, permitted, or forbidden within a society”. Those norms are even closer to a specific situation, “the standards of behavior that are based on widely shared beliefs of how individual group members ought to behave in a given situation”. Thus, social norms can be understood as informal rules which guide human behavior whether or not to be involved in corruption.

Primarily, social norms refers to the acceptability of a specific behavior and describes whether a specific course of action is approved by others in a given social context. In short, they indicate whether a behavior is moral and what one “ought to do” is the mental representations as normative expectations as per the economists. Similarly social psychologists call them injunctive norms (Cialdini et al. 1990). Additionally, social norms deals with the expected frequency and thus indicates how likely others are to follow the specific course of action. Based on this norms, person might ask oneself whether a respective behavior is common or deviant. Social norms also concerns with how people in the same situation would act in the specific way. Social beliefs and norms about the prevalence of accepted behavior are termed as empirical expectations by economists; however, social psychologists termed them as descriptive norms. In brief, descriptive norms describe the frequency of a corrupt act and the injunctive norms signal its permissibility. Both injunctive and descriptive social norms are learned through socialization or social learning. Corruption being “normal” can thus refer to frequency and acceptability dichotomically. Social norms related understanding of corruption is discussed in four different ways.

2.2 Democratic Norms and Corruption

The fundamental and relatively enduring values and principles of democratic norms is a regime that justifies its claims upon the loyalty of its citizens including the sources and limits of its own powers. By abuse of power public suffer from unequal treatment. It lacks promise, is widely expected not to promise for fairness and provides some space for inequality. Because in democracy, people expect a fair and equal chance to have voice in the democratic processes by which decisions are made and to have their interests and values respected.

2.3 Social Psychological View and Corruption

Why individuals sometimes act corruptly and sometimes not and how to prevent corrupt practices are the core focuses of psychological studies regarding corruption. Among the studies related to human behaviour, there always exists some queries about people's intention and acts. Queries like, why is it that some people abuse power for their private gain while others do not? Why some bend the rules while others adhere to them? Why some instigate bribe payments while others do not even think of it? These all questions tries to explore psychological aspects of human behaviour. Social, situational, and individual factors of the "dark side of human behavior", like cheating, lying, and corruption is the matter of psychology of human behaviour.

2.4 Micro-perspectives on the Gender and Corruption

There is strong link between gender analysis and corruption. Gender analysis is the micro perspective for sociological analysis. Countries with more women in political office results lower level of corruption. It is because of women are significantly less likely to consider bribery justifiable at the mass level. Micro level study among masses shows that women are less supportive to corrupt parties and behaviors due to gender role in those countries where women's interests are more effectively represented. Peoples are less likely to vote for a corrupt political leaders where gender equality is found with more expansive welfare of society and state. Additionally, gender equality socializes norms of impartiality that support a culture of anti-corruption. Social systems that are higher in gender inequality are patriarchal society which lacks impartiality in public affairs. This action is taken as the differentiation in terms of public service delivery referring to corrupt act. Hence we can say that higher levels of gender equality results lower levels of corruption.

2.5 Religiosity and Corruption

Fundamentally, religion teaches individuals between good and evil. Religion merely provides cues and guidance to individuals. Experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential are five dimensions of religiosity that determine the human behaviour. Religious norms and high degree religiosity may influence the propensity to engage in reporting, not engaging in corruption or accepting the corruption. So the religious people are less likely to involve illegal acts and private gains. While in contrast lack of religious norms and religiosity among individuals may influence the propensity to participate in corrupt acts and acceptance of corruption. Hence it can be concluded that individual with higher levels of religious influence result lower levels of involvement in corruptive act.

3. Approaches of Corruption

In the social sciences, scholars have approached corruption from different perspectives. Among them major three structural, interactional and normative approaches are mostly linked with sociology and anthropology that are discussed below.

3.1 Structural approach

Corruption is taken as endemic to some of the societies not to others in the world. Structural approach including moral and evolutionary overtones are more commonly found in development studies, popular media representations and international relation directed towards analysis of the

system of formal rules and institutions. In most of the society media adds 'corruption' as negative characteristic applied to the 'Other' list, such as underdevelopment, poverty, ignorance, repression of women, fundamentalism, fanaticism and irrationality. Its aim is to determine how and why certain actors particularly elites of the society are able to act for personal gain affecting to general people. It also aims to study how/why super-structured people of society involved in corruptive action towards bases of the society is the theme of Marxist structural approach.

3.2 Interactional approach

Interactional approach represented by the public and public officials settings and interaction primarily focus on the behaviour of actors in the society. In this approach corruption is defined as behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a public role in favour of private or personal gain. Corrupt behavior and act is that which 'harms the public- interest' at the time of interaction between them. Corruption takes place among the government (the executive) and the administrative and bureaucratic institutions (the civil service, judiciary, legislature, and local authorities) while serving general public. In terms of principal and agent interaction, either providers tries to take gain advantages from service seekers or differentiate between general people and relatives/family-members. For example a corrupt civil servant who uses his office as a private business or creates an informal 'black market' for official favours and 'rents', as interaction by helping certain clients to cut through the 'red tape' of bureaucracy in order to obtain something while serving him/her.

3.3 Normative Approach

Society is composition of social relation, interaction, social conduct and mores. Sociologist and human scientists agree on the damages that corruption can affect the moral aspects of individuals within the society. Deterioration of moralities and ethics can be problematic for scientific inquiry. Public officers who seek to serve their own interests through bribes, gifts, have favors lessening the moral, virtue and ethical aspects. Findings of ethnographic literature on corruption based on moral norms had proven this evidence. Social morality is involved more on social customs. There is a causal relationship between morality and economic development, social trust, social capital and civil society which differently confers corruption in the society. Moral aspects tend to be socially and culturally specific; however, corruption may exist in each society.

4. Causes and Types of Corruption

Based on different literatures following are found as the major causes of corruption in the society.

View	Activities
The neo-liberal school	Considers corruption to be one of the effects of the black market caused by excessive state interventionism.
Gender View	Less female representation in politics, possibly larger probability of an act of corruption (Dollar et al. 2001).
Sociological View	Social values and norms based on tradition and culture such as blessing to earn more money and become rich in Vijaya dashami tika by the elders.
Mode of	Norms and values raised from mode of production such as capitalist mode of

View	Activities
Production (Marxist)	production to control over resources, more emphasis on earnings.
Historical tradition	In the name of prior governance system and values new ruler openly involve in corrupt activities
Demand and supply View (IMF)	Demand by the public for corrupt acts affects to the supply by the public officials.
Behavioural	Corruption can be blamed on poverty, greed and an insatiable appetite of people to accumulate wealth against oath where greed indeed is a major menace for corruption. (Onongha, 2007)
Familism	how individuals view their loyalties to family as opposed to other citizens based on religions and may affect the level of nepotism. (Banfield, 1958)

Scholars mainly categorized corruption into grand corruption and petty corruption and also tried to distinguish between these. Grand corruption occurs at the highest level of the political system such as the executive branch of government. Grand corruption can also include political gains. On the other hand, petty corruption occurs at the societal level, which usually consists of bribes and kickbacks within the bureaucratic-public relationship in society. Petty corruption is survival corruption, where citizens bribe civil servants to bypass bureaucratic red tape or avoid excessive government regulations, and where a public official receives kickbacks from the public as a means to supplement their low public servant salary. Corrupt behaviors are like bribery, extortion, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, cronyism, appropriation of public assets and property for private use and that influence peddling. Either one or more form of these act are mostly prevailed in many society. American political scientist A.J. Heidenheimer (1989a) termed corruption as following ways:

'White' Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes acts that a majority of people would not consider worthy of punishment. • is justified by both parties to be beneficial in some ways for society.
'Grey' Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes acts that "some elements" would want to see punished, but others would not. • affects citizens' perception and would bear low mental costs when they commit corruption. • elites and ordinary citizens have different views on its acceptability and punishability. • is most destructive to a political system. • is soft type of corruption.
'Black' Corruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes acts that a "majority consensus . . . would condemn and would want to see punished on the grounds of principle." • is perceived by both parties as fundamentally harmful to the society. • is hard type of corruption.

5. Dimensions of Corruption

Reviewing the existing different studies related to corruption and corrupt act, social, cultural, economic, legal and political aspects determines the human behavior. Along with other dimensions some more specific and logical studies concluded by the scholars are discussed here.

Creating Beneficial Relationships: sociology is the study of relationships and corruption that deviates and divert the relationship in society. If anyone creates favorable environment whether there are any legal basis and exploits existing relationships between principal and agent is called corruption.

Obtaining Direct Personal Gain: public officials have their well-defined and prescribed role in the society. If he/she violates or neglect such role and responsibility and concentrates to the personal gain then it leads to the failure of public policy.

Lack of Oversight: within the society we can find check and balance relationships. If the officials or organization lacks to check and oversee according to the rule corruption will be increased in such situation.

Enforcing In-Group or Out-Group Divisions: Familism, nepotism, favoritism, differentiation are the major causes to increase corruption in the society and organization. If any officials treats any public in terms of in-group or out-group reference, there is high chance of injustice and corruption.

Controlling or Suppressing Information: transparency and right to information backed by the accountability and responsibility of officials. If the information related to officials' activities are controlled and suppressed, the chance of corruptive act would increase automatically.

6. Socio-anthropological Methods to Control Corruption

Corruption is an interpretively ambiguous and intrinsically normative concept. Theoretical considerations based on rational choice thinking, most prominently the principal-agent model. Klitgaard (1988) developed corruption formula ($\text{corruption} = \text{monopoly} + \text{discretion} - \text{transparency}$) which provides clue for anti-corruption efforts. According to the formula corruption is evaluated against the personal benefit that could be obtained with illegal act. It has proven to be very convincing in explaining factors that promote corruption, but less so for identifying solutions to the problem. Some empirical evidences suggest, it has turned out that a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing national anti-corruption strategies has not been successful additionally. Thus, explanatory factors for the occurrence and combat of corruption have been insufficient. Klitgaard's equation is emphasizing attention to horizontal internal approach to accountability. Four key notions embedded in the anti-corruption norm are, corruption is dysfunctional, corruption is wrong, corruption is transactional, and corruption is (de)limited. Based on the literatures followings are most applicable methods for anti-corruption strategies.

Behavioral Research	provides one remedy that allows an investigation of specific types of corruption and how they relate to the different types of social norms.
Collective	Mass media, and argumentation are the vital efforts to control the corrupt

Approach	behaviour whether injunctive of descriptive.
Gender Perspective	gender and corruption drew key insights into the relationship with a micro-perspective that incorporated individuals’ opinions. Gender role, women’s interest and gender equality socialization are the key aspects to control corrupt behaviour at micro level linking with gender perspectives.
Religiosity	communities where the majority of people are actively religious, those people will be less likely than those who are not religious to commit delinquent acts. It is due to the religious language and cues about honesty, hell, and punishment contribute to the reduction of corruption in society.
Legal Theory	common law and civil law system views corruption related behavior differently. the greater protections of property against the state embodied in common law systems improve various aspects of government performance, including reducing corruption.

Corruption, clannism and chronism (3C) are global problem that forced any state to the failed condition. In this regard both corruption and clannism also pushed the society in chronic state. Due to these reason state become failure ultimately. So leaders of any society and nations must be sincere to demolish clannism and corruption.

6.1. Elimination of Clannism

Clannism in Somali culture termed as qabiilism refers to the social system based on clan affiliation mostly found in northern Africa in the past. If the political parties and state institutions affected by clannism it would be very unfair and unjust for those society. As result, all the state institutions, policies and democracy would be under the control of some elite clan and family. These institutions and policies allow corruption to spread easily and society systemically become unjust. Democratically state appointments and the different ministerial nominations were all stiffly influenced by clannism that hindered justice system, create loyalists and manipulate society and ultimately pushed to fail state. It is due to the failure of the political elite to distinguish between clan politics and a multiparty structure for just society. It is at this background, elimination of clannism culture become necessary for just and fair treatment.

6.2 Timely Redress of Chronic Social Structures

Corruption itself leads to failure state and social institutions as chronic social/state institutions provides the sufficient space for corruption. As Weberian institutionalist tradition, the issues of state collapse are disaggregated into three dimensions of state capacity which makes and enforce binding rules, monopolising the means of violence and collection of taxes. If the law making and enforcing structures failed to perform its tasks, number of violence increases in the society and collected taxes were not used for social welfare these would increase corruption and state structures become failed as problem of Srilanka-2022. So the state and social policy should focus on timely redressal of chronic state/social structures.

7. Corruption Control Mechanisms in Nepal

According to corruption perception index (CPI) published by Transparency International (TI) globally, Nepal's rank is mostly in the state known as still fail to tackle corruption effectively. Based on the yearly report published by TI, Nepal recorded lowest with 90th rank in 2004 AD and highest with 154th rank in 2011 AD. In between 2004-2019 reports, average number of CPI obtained by Nepal was 26.80. According to the report published by TI in 2022, among the 180 countries and territories, two third of the countries score below 50 and the average is 43 in which score ranges between 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. Nepal scored 33 and ranked in 117th (six countries scored 33 and among them Nepal ranked 3rd position in the table) position. Anti-corruption efforts in Nepal had adopted since Ram Shah's period of Nyaya (Justice) such as 'Nyaya Napaye Gorkha Janu', Divyopadesh by Prithivi Narayan Shah such as 'Ghush Line ra Ghush Dine Desh ka Mahasatur hun'. During the Democratic, Panchayati and Federal system in Nepal, various institutional measures in the form of establishment of anti-corruption agencies, laws and policies are established and adopted nationally. Some institutional and legal provisions established against corruption in Nepal are as follows.

A. Institution	Roles and Responsibilities
The Commission for the Investigation of Authority (CIAA)	Performs Curative, Punitive and Preventive activities regarding corrupt/suspected actions of public officials and civil servants with investigation.
Office of the Auditor General (OAG)	Checks financial irregularities of the public officials and institutions by regular audit and specific audit.
National Vigilance Centre (NVC)	Performs vigilance (preventive and promotive activities) against misconduct along with Technical Audit of the development projects of government in the area of time, cost, quality, quantity and claim and litigations.
Department of Money Laundering Investigation (DMLI)	Established to carry out investigation on Money/Asset Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. Department is currently investigating unlawful and unexpected earning of the persons either identified or reported and taking actions as per the rule.
Department of Revenue Investigation (DRI)	<p>Objectives: Controlling Revenue Leakages and Economic Crimes through transparent, fair and responsible revenue administration by means of economic information system.</p> <p>Strategies: In order to achieve the aforementioned objective, the DRI follows the three-pronged strategy as Promotional, Preventive and Curative Strategy.</p>
Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB)	Along with other objectives NRB is established to develop a secure, healthy and efficient system of payment based on annual

	monetary policy.
Court	As per the investigation report by the respective sector court decides the activities whether the act is corrupt or not.
Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB)	Established to create a civilized and prosperous society by conducting effective investigation of complex and profound nature criminal offenses, contributing to compliance, protection and promotion of prevailing Laws and Acts of Nepal by Nepal Police.
Transparency International, Nepal Chapter	A civil society institution dedicated to increasing public accountability and curbing corruption in all walks of life.
Civil Society	civil society such as institutions, mass media, advocators involved to increase public awareness and peoples participation against corruption.
B. Laws	
The Prevention of Corruption Act 2002 AD	
National Vigilance Center (Work-Operation) Regulation, 2065 BS.	
Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act, 2064	Good Governance (Management and Operation) Rules-2065
The Public Procurement Act, 2063 (2007)	The Public Procurement Rule, 2064 (2008)
Anti-Money Laundering Act 2064	Anti-Money Laundering Rules, 2073
Other related Act/Laws	
Ratification of United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC2003) in 2011 AD	

8. Conclusion

Etymologically corruption is the term (Latin word-corruptio) linked with performance of the individuals while corruption is primarily related to the activities of public institutions or officials with intention of personal benefits. Although, modern political thought developed normative aspect with narrow sense there was predominance of religious value and beliefs. Socio-anthropologically corruption is understood as in different ways. Firstly, rejection of democratic norms and poor loyalties towards sovereign people as democratic. Secondly, socio-psychological views understood as difference in intention of actor, unacceptable attitudes and behavior as well as adhering private gain. Thirdly, micro perspectives in terms of gender inequality, female behave with lack of impartiality and prevalence of mistreatment as anyone born as female due to patriarchal norms. Lastly, religious views as the person act against religious values and cues and inability of person to

differentiate right or wrong in the society. As result state may be failed to tackle corruption. Clannism and chronism are the major causes to push any state in this condition so that it would be addressed properly.

Major three approaches are under consideration of the study in sociological and anthropological literatures. Predominance of Creamy layer towards general public as structural, losing moral behavior as normative and give and take relation between service providers and service seekers as interactional approaches to describe unlawful act. Corruption in the society occurred due to abuse of power including different thought like neo-liberal, gender, Marxist, sociological etc. Scholars concluded five dimensions of corruption as creation of beneficial relationship, adhering personal gain, poor oversight practice, in-group-out-group divisions and less transparency in communication. It is at this background corruption is classified into grand and petty on the basis of level and sociologically into white, grey and black corruption. Due to challenging phenomena of corruption like property related social reputation, less respect to the labour work, technological advancement, poor social security system, secret decision making practice etc., national and international efforts are centralized against corruption. Socio-anthropologically behavioural, collective, gender, legal and religious aspects are most effective ways to control corruption. In case of Nepal institutional and legal mechanisms are established to control corruption, however, the nation is still in the state of fail to tackle corruption effectively.

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