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# Tolerance to Petty Corruption in Public Sector: A Review

\_\_\_\_\_ Jamil Ahmad  
\_\_\_\_\_ Alia Ahmad  
\_\_\_\_\_ Taseer Salahuddin

Petty or low level corruption is far more harmful and much more frequent as compared to mega corruption (Faisal and Jafri, 2017). It results in the ferocious effects on the economy of any country along with the deterioration in the social development and well being. This paper is a review of research on petty or low level corruption in public sector. Various determinants, factors, and effects of tolerance towards the low level corruption are highlighted via literature review. How do citizens perceive petty corruption? Why do citizens tolerate petty corruption? What makes them accept these small but routine corrupt practices in public sector? What adverse effects are created on the society as a whole due to this tolerance of petty corruption? These are the questions answered by review of research studies at international level. At the end some remedies and protective measures are suggested against this silent but melacious social disease.

## INTRODUCTION

Corruption both at bigger or smaller level damages a society. Petty or low-level corruption, routine bribery, fraud, favoritism etc. are far more harmful due to its deep rooted nature and frequent intensity (Faisal and Jafri, 2017). This low level corruption can be seen in the public sector at due to the motivations of corrupt behaviors (Bicchieri, Ganegonda, 2016). Corruption till 1980 was considered a subject of sociological research, political science, criminal law, or the economics and was not paid as much attention however, nowadays it has become an important area of research especially in public sector (Ram. S Dubey, JyotiKhanna, 2015). The paradox of tolerance towards corruption is not an easy phenomenon to discuss or measure, having a dexterous nature in the public sector, bureaucracy and in various other political institutions. Low level corruption is commonly bribery, fraud, nepotism, embezzlement, illegal grafting, kickbacks, favoritism, red tapism, theft, clientism and the cronyism. Low level corruption is one of the major in making and implementing fair policies and mechanisms to stabilize the economy of the country. As it encompasses a broad range of the attitudes, behaviors and the

actions so it is multidimensional in nature. The vicious act of low level corruption creates a large gap between the different classes or groups of people in the societies affecting the common interest of individuals by usurping and grabbing the power (Fukuyama, 2014).

The purpose of this paper is to examine findings and systematically focus the meaning and understanding of tolerance to low level corruption in the public sector and various determinants of tolerance and to low level corruption in the public sector. To fulfill this purpose a comprehensive literature review has been done including studies from different aspects of petty corruption, its definition and nature, its determinants, its tolerance in public sector, its effects and impacts on the society as a whole. For example,

Eugen Dimant, Guglielmo Tosato, (2017) examined the systematic classification and the various determinants and its major effects of the low level corruption according to empirical literature; Quah (2001) describes the phenomenon of low level corruption globalization in the public sector and how to combat it specifically in the Asian countries where tolerance to corruption consists of great disparity; Alexandra Mills (2012) provides the steps to prevent the paradox of low level corruption in the public sector, though this idea seems rigid, full of risks and disproportionate but goal to achieve the eradication of low level corruption make it fair and efficient; Joseph Pozsgai (2015) has been doing research in the prevention of corruption in public sector policies for the past six to eight years, so and so forth. Following review of literature builds the argument in a step wise manner.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### What is Corruption?

Corruption has been defined in as dishonesty and abuse of power generally. Specifically few definitions of corruption include; Dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. The action or effect of making someone or something morally depraved (Cambridge dictionary), Dishonest or illegal behavior, especially of people in authority allegations of bribery and corruption. The act or effect of making someone change from moral to immoral standards of behavior (Oxford Learner's Dictionary), Corruption is dishonesty and illegal behavior by people in positions of authority or power. the act of corrupting or state of being corrupt, moral perversion; depravity, dishonesty, especially bribery, putrefaction or decay, alteration, as of a manuscript, an altered form of a word (Collins English dictionary) etc.

Researchers have interpreted corruption as subjective phenomenon with various shades. Huberts (2010) considered the idea of corruption as the intricate one and not easy to understand because it comprised of various ideas which make the policy makers think its measures for control of corruption in the public sector by suggesting different analogy of elements. Johnston (1996) one line definition of word corruption is difficult to find out because there exists some attitudes or behaviors as far as the corruption is concerned that depicts this paradox. Tanzi

(1998 & 2008) elaborate corruption as “like an elephant, even though it may be difficult to describe, it is generally not difficult to recognize when observed”. Rußgamer, (1996) considers corruption as hidden, furtive, intimate and the obscure community formed by the actors during which they privately get advantages and exchange the relationship secretly. According to Van Duyne, Huberts, Jurkiewicz and Maesschalch, (2008) corruption no doubt is the contravention of norms and disgrace of the moral values as well as the immoral behavior in the public sector. For Tanzi, (1995) and Khan, (1996) Corruption is abuse of power, in which actors utilize the authority, position for personal benefits and interests. Park, (2003) cited in Rabl and Kuhlmann, (2008) states that corruption of wide range occurs by the mutual agreement and it is deliberately and intentionally exchange or transfer of rewards and various mutual benefits. Low level corruption can also be termed against the law as an act or corrupt behavior of bribery with the intention to give some interest or benefit to someone contradicting to his valid formal duties and work.

The analogy of term corruption is simply the unlawful and misuse of the powers in any public office for the purposes of the private gain NACS, (2002). Some other researchers and dictionaries with their elaborate definitions and interpretations of corruption include (Lasthuizen, Huberts, and Kaptein (2002); McMullan, (1996); Simpson, (1977); Weber, (1964) and The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential, (2017).

### **What is Public sector?**

(Collins Dictionary) describes the phenomenon of the term public sector is “that part of a country's economy, which is controlled or supported financially by the government or the part of an economy that consists of state-owned institutions, including nationalized industries and services provided by local authorities.” (Investorwords, WebFinance, 2016) describes public sector comprises of public enterprises and the public services which include the governmental services of every kind, whether infrastructural, educational, health, military or the police etc which are paying services and benefiting the society. (Margaret Rouse, 2015) viewed the enigma of the public sector that can be easily termed as that area of a whole economic system of any country regulated by the local, national, state or the provincial government. In the 21st century technology has been playing its major role in various areas including the public sector by formulating different policies, methods, plans and the standards for the benefit of the country (Huberts 2010). But unfortunately, low level corruption can easily be seen by the bureaucrats and the public officials while performing their duties, technology should make solutions to bring transparency and pellucidity in the public sector. The major key phenomenon of the corruption is for the attaining of money either via extortion, bribery or the by fraud in transactions resulting in the high risk of the illegal attitude of the tolerance to the low level corruption.

**What is Corruption tolerance?**

According to Cambridge dictionary tolerance is “willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them.” Whereas corruption tolerance is defined by Koudelkova(2015) as “Tolerance of the Low level corruption in the public sector is a well known social enigma, having the cataclysmic, pernicious and the lethal effect due to the absence of accountability, unsuitable, working conditions, the greed of power or thirst and the sense of insecurity”. Similarly Tverdova, (2007) states that corruption tolerance exists in society because of its acceptance and unethical practices in the public sector to meet their demands from an unlawful and illegal way. Corruption tolerance effect the regime of public sector specifically Seligson, (2002). The recognition of ransom, extortion or bribery can be considered as the tolerance of corruption Manzetti and Wilson, (2009). According to Gillespie and Okruhlik, (1991) Impropriety should be eradicated to eradicate the corruption tolerance and the social pressure should be high to expunge or exterminate the acceptance of the low level of corruption. Tanaka, (2005) states that the tolerance of low level of corruption is some how the adequacy or competency of the government to accept the different norms of corruption as nepotism. For further description and interpretation of corruption tolerance see (McCann, Durand, (2005); Chang, Kerr, (2009) Joseph Pozsgai Alvarez, (2016); Blake, (2009); Manzetti, (2000); Bergman, (2009); Spengler, (2010); Karklins, (2005); Pozsgai Alvarez, (2015) & Moreno, Sautu, Del Castillo, Guerrero, Blake, (2009)). After analyzing all these studies it became clear that the low corruption tolerance can be considered as the variable which can be measured as an opinion or acceptance towards the evil of intention of bribery. The fact is this low corruption tolerance in the public sector which unfortunately increases the level of corruption at the highest level including the bureaucratic corruption due to the various reasons. Activities of low corruption tolerance can be divided into the extortive activities and the collusive movements, but the most important ingredients are the relation between the beneficiary and secondly benefactor in combating the corruption tolerance at the low level in the major public sector. As far as the extortive corruption is concerned government officials where they are relying on the citizens for their transactions, but in the collusive corruption, private citizens and the public officials are engaged in the greed and need of the bribery along with ransom in the public sector. A negative intention and attitude of citizens over bribery follows the high level of corrupt transactions in the public sector and motivating the citizens to sustain the attitude towards the corruption. Thus an empirical study is required to understand the phenomenon of tolerance to corruption at low level in the public sector. A negative intention and attitude of citizens over bribery follows the highest level of corrupt transactions in the public sector and motivating the citizens to sustain the attitude towards the low level corruption.

### **Citizen perspective and acceptance of Petty Corruption in Public Sector**

According to The Encyclopedia of World Problems, (2017) public trust breaks when there exists a multiform low level of corruption in the public sector by the public officials. Corruption is the misuse of public office for their personal ends or to serve a group of people, which affecting badly the public phenomenon by the companies, businessmen or the civil servants or any of the private individuals. The gratuity is one of the major external factors interceding with the process of decision making and the corrupter and corrupted both equally liable to punishments having a dual responsibility. The State should perform his duty to eradicate this paradox of low level corruption in the public sector. (Joseph, 2015) states that due to the existence of low level corruption there icreates a big gap of trust between the state and the individual, including their public and private areas of the public sector. No doubt corruption is unacceptable if it exists at high governmental level by betraying the level of trust and robbing the money affecting the interests of the state in the public sector at the whole, citizens can also get affected by the corruption individually due to the paying of low wages along with neglected attitude(RasmaKarklins, 2005). So a great difference between the low level of corruption LLC and the high level of corruption HLC, in the low level of corruption citizens may be willfully engaging to do efforts for the extortions while making the transactions (Uslaner, 2008). He further says that corruption of the low level LLC is all about the inequality of officials as well as the entrepreneurs following their illegitimate means of getting wealthy, though it does not create the income gap but lead relatively innocuous a way towards the bribes, alienation economic schism in the public sector. Furthermore, Blake(2009) and (Balan, 2011) point out that the relation between the citizens and the constancy of tolerance of low level corruption concerned with the legitimacy, assurance, trust or faith in the public sector of underdeveloped countries can be segregated into the willingness of citizen's to indulge in the low level corruption and the element of tolerance towards low level corruption for the support of the corrupt politicians. As compared to criminals acts, low level of corruption can be considered the exploiting the citizens in their social values by misusing the public office for their personal private matters(Anderson, &Tverdova, 2003). Low level corruption includes the elements of the cronyism, deference, electoral fraud in the public sector, racketeering, prominently bribery and the nepotism(Rose-Ackerman, 2005). According to Spengler, (2010) external factors which lead towards the low level corruption are both political and economic. (Manzetti, 2000) puts the respncibility on the citizens to play their role while analyzing the low level corruption by keeping in view the different scenarios.

### **Forms of Petty Corruption in Public Sector**

Petty or low level corruption is multidimensional in nature so it has many forms. These include **Bribry** (Jens Chr. Andvig, (2000);Benjamin A. Olken, (2011)&Brollo et al, (2010))which is defines as “ the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of any item of value to influence the actions of an official or other person

in charge of a public or legal duty”(Black's Law Dictionary); **Fraud**(Fjeldstad, (1999) and Eskeland, Thiele, (1999), defined as “an illegal act refers to any act that is contrary to the law, these are also irregularities which are misstatements, omissions or acts which could have been carried out intentionally or unintentionally. It has to do with an activity or practice which is not according to the usual rules, or not normal”(Ojeme, 2010); **Favouritism** (Ozler, Buyukarslan, 2011; Kwon, 2005; Ozler et al, 2007 and Ponzo&Scoppa 2010); **Nepotism** (Ozler et al, 2007 and Ozkan, 2011); **Extortion**(Odd HelgeFjeldsta, 2000) and **Embezzlement**(Inge Amundsen, 2000).

### **Determinants of Petty Corruption in Public Sector**

The factors that determine the extent and nature of petty corruption in clude equally multidimensional aspects. These determinants include attitude of irresponsibility, lack of transparency, class nadethanic difference, paucity of punitive measures, theft, beaurucratic attitudes, etc.

Due to the attitude of irresponsibility along with indiscipline in the public sector increased the rate and level of corruption in the government offices, organizations and in the various other departments of the public sector. The major factor behind this irresponsibility is the unsuitable office timings, the indulgence of higher authority towards some subordinates or diverting attention by doing part-time other jobs or work affecting the interest of the public sector (CharasMaduTella, Shehu Mustapha Liberty Paul, Y. Mbaya, 2014).

Normally the different departments of government hide the basic information by moving the contents of files secretly and the people concerned with matters that are kept unaware and ignorant regarding their case (Stapenhurst, Johnston and Pelizzo 2006). This absence of communication damages the link between the aggrieved and the administration giving rise to low-level corruption(Stapenhurst, Johnston and Pelizzo 2006). The need for transparency is to give free and easy access to citizens relevant to public information to the citizens (Catharina Lindstedt, Daniel Naurin, 2005).

Class war or the class difference is one of the highest factors of low-level tolerance of the paradox of corruption in public sector causing distrust and frustration because of the division in two groups (Alexandra Mills, 2012). It is the need of the time to restrain the exerting and manipulating power by following the principles of public accountability (Alexandra Mills, 2012).In the scenario of malicious practices of group favoritism in the public sector, the ethnic diversity causes the low level of corruption(see Treisman, (2000); Franck, (2011) and Foellmi, (2007)).

“A man's conscience and his judgment is the same thing; and as the judgment, so also the conscience, may be erroneous” (D. Kaufmann, 2005). When there exists scarcity of the punitive measures for the assurance of phenomenon of accountability, transparency, obligable or monitoring of the balanced justice system, people will show continuously their corrupt and abusive behavior in the field of public sector.

Corruption also occurs in the form of embezzlement or theft when there is an alteration or modification of the valuable materials, property or in monetary form. In public sector officials do the corruption of low level for the enhancement of revenue and to raise finance by taking control of illegal assets or illegal access to funds (Kelly Mua Kingsley, 2015). Albrecht, (2005) argued “fraud is rarely seen, however, the symptoms of fraud are usually observed.” Corrupt conduct has the adverse effects in the administration of public sector because they are not honest, fair or impartial while performing their functions and reflects the Inequitable, unresponsive, an inefficient or the secretive and reckless behavior of embezzlement (Kelly Mua Kingsley, 2015).

(Adler, 2012) Bureaucracy is the administration of different departments by the public officials who formulate and regulate the policies regarding the mechanism. Bureaucracy holds a dynamic of corruption in the public sector all over the world, influencing the capital accumulation and the economic growth of different countries. Bureaucrats abuse their power by doing misrepresentation and misinforming the officials of government regarding the accurate data of economy of public goods (Aviral Kumar Tiwari, (2012) and Myint (2000)). The Transparency international (1999) describes phenomenon of corruption as “giving or receiving undue advantage in the course of business activities leading to acts in breach of a person's duties.” Akcay, (2002); Johnston, (1999); (Tanzi, 1998) & (Rose Ackerman, 2010) enumerated various reasons for bureaucratic corruption as the low level of salaries in the public sector, the paucity of developed political activities, the disparity in socio economic life and the widespread of poverty. depicts bureaucratic corruption, it as “misuse of public power for private benefits, e.g., bribing of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, or embezzlement of public funds.”

Globalization is considered as the multi dimensional enigma, and various researchers could not find its true meaning, but in the general sense, globalization is considered as the increase in the capital and development of the country. It can be termed as to widen, extend, broaden, deepen and speed up the world wide economy dynamically with respect to all environmental, financial spheres, political, economic and social extent of the whole world affairs (see Charron, (2009); Sandholtz, Koetzle, (2000); David, Anthony, Jonathan, (1999); Lalountas, (2011) and Gerald E. Caiden, (2001).

### **Strategies to combat Petty-corruption**

Transparency in work procedures, proper and adequate salaries, e-governance, less red-tapism, economic growth specifically pro-poor policies can help reduce petty corruption.

Red tapism gave rise to the desirability of low level corruption in the public sector and it is an indicator that strategy should be done to fight against this (Augusto Lopez, 2014). Van Rijckeghem, Weder, (2001) shows in his empirical work that there can be seen an inverse relationship between the evil of corruption and wages in the public sector. To fight against the curse of the low level corruption initiative of e-governance should be taken by following the successful legal framework,

public meetings, proactive dissemination and transparency for the citizens (Anderson, 2009). The government should take measures to enhance the transparency in the management of the public sector by making procurement of public goods, the availability of subsidies and extra-budgetary funds, facilitation of the soft credits and the exemption of taxes Collier, (2007). Pellegrini, Gerlagh, (2004) states that, to fight against the evil of low level corruption in the public sector well economic growth of a country will have positive effects because corruption and growth have significant relationship level. To fight against the paradox of low level corruption in the public sector, there is a need to eradicate the bribery, fraud, nepotism, embezzlement, grafting, kick back, theft, cronyism and the evil of favoritism because it creates the corrupt mafias and the well organized various criminal groups creates the environment of intimidation, uncertainty and the fear (Brain, Richard, 2012). Likewise, there is a huge fight in the public sector to fight against the evils of embezzlement, which is the stealing or misappropriation of resources by the public officials during the performance of their duties (Goel, R.K, Nelson, 2010).

### **Recommendations And Remedies to Overcome Petty Corruption In The Public Sector**

The abuse of power or misuse of certain public office by the public officials should be curtailed by

- doing identification of the weaknesses of the corrupt system in the public sector
- formulation of policies for the achievement of well defined goals by targeting to solve the causing factors of low level corruption in the public sector
- identification of the threats in the way of smooth functioning of the public sector and monitoring the irregularities as to low level corruption
- prepare the mechanisms to ensure the effective participation in the development of the economy of the country and to regulate the governmental authorities, organizations of civil societies and the bodies of law enforcement.

(Gadit, 2011)

It can be seen that the trend of low level corruption in the public sector due to various reasons, but this is a need of time to curb this evil by

- control on the weak administrative system and management
- less interference of government in the economy of the country
- make control of the complex system of corrupt bureaucracy
- overcome the nepotism, favoritism, fraud, theft, extortion and the enigma of embezzlement in the private monopolies in the system during the absence of accountable government



- observe the conflict of interests in the administrative units existing between the various departments of the public sector and assure the effective control of public department
- punishments should be inflicted in the case of neglect or irregularities while performing the functions in the public sector to avoid the malafide attitude and behaviors.

(Taghavi, 2011)

In the Asian and Pacific region developing countries have been suffered mostly by the trickery of low level corruption and it must be restrained by

- implementation of fair regulation of procedures and impartial policies against the evil of corruption
  - promotion of the rule of law and justice by enhancing the coordination between the various departments of the public sectors and clear criteria of recruitment of the police officers
  - sanctions against the malevolent, malignant, corrupt and pernicious acts of public officials by awarding the punishments
  - promotion of the anti-corruption strategies against the bribery culture and to fight against corrupt behaviors
  - establishment of the legal framework for the prevention of corrupt activities of fraud, kick back, nepotism and the favoritism and also to curb the poor and inadequate strategies
  - restraining the political leaders not to take part in the competition of the corrupt activities and should formulate the anti corruption rules
  - spread the awareness regarding the anti corruption phenomenon via newspapers, internet, different workshops and by the organization of seminars all over the country.
  - eradication of the autocracy and to promote the system of accountability and better governance by the formulation of the administrative reforms all over the country
  - most important there is a dire need of open public participation and citizens to curb the low level corruption in the public sector
- (Myint, 2000)

The low level corruption in the public sector destructing the developing countries and practical steps should be made

- to provide adequate supervision of systems, procedures, and the policies
  - strengthen the administrative measures and assure consistent regulation of acts
  - provide adequate, sufficient systems for the public officials, along with adequate human resources
  - enhance the power of knowledge, skills, appropriate interests and to avoid the conflicts of interest
  - awake the sense of responsibility in the public officials and in the citizens to eliminate the low level corruption by reviewing the criteria of the work practices
  - analyse the corrupt, vulnerable and Unethical behavior of the public officials in the public sector and to maintain a mechanism to drive the identification factors in the regulation of effective fair and just measures
  - fair research should be made on the basic root causes of the evil factors of the corruption to bring revolutionary reforms and to improve the performance of the government
  - to improve the economic growth by making the policies on the micro economic level to formulate the better functioning of government by improving the equality, open and honest criteria
  - proposals should be made to improve the good governance by ensuring the fundamental changes of malafide practices
- (Qadir, 2003)

## CONCLUSIONS

(Ghulam, Mumtaz, 2008) After analyzing the different determinants as to the tolerance of the low level of corruption in the public sector it can be seen that it exists in developing as well as in the developed countries gets affected by both economic and non economic aspects. Economic and the non economic factors include the development level, economic freedom, raise of income, distribution of income in public sector etc. Level of corruption can be reduced by the rise in the globalization, development of level and the economic freedom all over the world but it also depends on the variations on the level of distribution of income. Empirical findings show that the economic factors are more relevant as compared to the non economic socio cultural factors for reducing the level of corruption at the low level with the view of citizen's perspective. In developing as well as in developed countries, democratic norms are also playing their role in the eruption of corruption, so it is the duty of government to play its major role in the policy making of economic developments to focus on the social justice. (Johnston, 2010) For the purposes of better development of any country and its public sectors, anti corruption programs and training must be arranged to prevent and make an obstacle in the way of low level corruption practically, while this can be done only through the systematic mechanism of government. (Ismail and Rizvi, 14) As compared to European and South Asian countries the low level corruption expands

due to the weak and poor governance by practicing embezzlement, bribery, fraud, theft, nepotism, grafting, kickbacks and favoritism which lessen the efficiency, competency and capability by lowering the potential. There is a strong need to strengthen the legal and judicial process to fight against the evil of corruption by punishing the culprits. (Martinez Vazquez, ArzedelGranado, Boex, 2007) Normally, the low level corruption does not affect the petty matters, but in the long run, the bribery is a barrier towards the development of any country. (Andersson, Bergman, 2009) The public sector low level corruption creates an impediment to the rise and advancement of the economy as well as the well being of people, which is unavoidable practice, there is a persuasive need to curb this evil of low level corruption. As long as the public officials present in the public sector will exercise their discretionary authorities by misuse of power and abuse of trust, it will remain a fragile effort to formulate the regulations against the low level corruption. So, procedural and structural anti corruption laws should be made against the illegal practice of bribery and embezzlement by sanctions. Every department of the public sector should constitute the system of check and balances to reduce the level of corruption. (Rose Ackerman, 2010) Besides all the factors, the paradox of low level corruption in the form of bribery, fraud, and theft affects the global infrastructure of the public sector of any country by creating the differences in the development of the economy, cultural backwardness, poverty, and the unemployment.

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