

**INDIA
CORRUPTION
STUDY:
2002-09**

A Comparative
Scenario

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PREFACE

CMS brings this “overview” based on its India Corruption Surveys between 2002-2009. Our study, “India Corruption Study 2008 with focus on BPL Households” continues to be a sought after report. As I mentioned in the preface to our first Corruption Report (2000), we expect these publications to help grapple with the menace of corruption in systemic way. As promised in that 2000 preface, since then CMS has been conducting studies on corruption as an annual exercise.

A more detailed publication on corruption in India in a dozen public services is expected to be out early 2011. Another report on how news bulletins of our news channels have been covering corruption will be released in two weeks. We continue to believe that more reliable analysis, based on primary surveys, enables a more serious and strategic initiative to curb corruption in the country.

We welcome your feedback & suggestions on this publication.

July 23, 2010



P.N. Vasanti
Director, CMS



सत्यमेव जयते
प्रत्युष सिन्हा
Pratyush Sinha

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July 22, 2010

FOREWORD

The India Corruption Study, 2002-09 conducted by the Centre for Media Studies highlights the trends in corruption across the country during the first decade of this century especially with regard to the delivery of basic services to the citizens by the government. It is sad that while commendable progress has been made in terms of e-governance, transparency and accountability the common man has to pay bribes to avail himself of basic services. This shows that without raising awareness among people and educating them against corruption combating any form of corruption would be difficult. The public should be empowered to say no to corruption.

The real benefit of such studies would accrue to the citizens only when the findings are used for taking corrective action by the government and civil society organisations in order to combat corruption.

(Pratyush Sinha)

INDIA CORRUPTION STUDY: 2002-09

A Comparative Scenario

1.0 Background

The 6th round of India Corruption study (ICS) of CMS in 2009 has reaffirmed the rampant and omni-presence of corruption in the country. No state or even a village could claim to be corruption-free. And the worst sufferer is- a common man-*aam adami*. The ICS 2007 conducted among below poverty line (BPL) households had brought out that every third household either paid bribe or used a contact to avail the services of government departments in the country. The earlier rounds of ICS too had shown that high percentage of households felt that the level of corruption has increased (reference being preceding year). Though the percentage of those who felt that 'level of corruption is decreasing' has shown an upward trend yet it was not substantial, only one out of five households felt so.

CMS carried out its 1st round of India Corruption Study in 2000 and was limited to six cities and six public services. With each round it not only expanded its coverage but also refined its research methodology. CMS strongly believe that it is important to have views and opinion of households, who had 'experienced' corruption. World over, most of the studies undertaken to measure the extent of corruption has been based on perception (opinion) of experts or a network of their local correspondents. However, in India, CMS developed a methodology, which captured both perception and experience of the households. Since 2005, CMS is using a model known as P+E+E model, where it presents the findings based on Perception and Experience. Based

on this it estimates the monetary value of bribe being paid as well as the estimated number of households in the country, which pay bribe during the year.

Brief Overview of India Corruption Study Series (2002-09)

Coverage	ICS rounds				
	2002	2003	2005	2007	2009
Locations	5 cities	5 cities	20 states	31 states/UTs	19 states
Respondent Group (include Existing and Potential Users)	U	U	U+R	BPL households (R+U)	R+U
Sample Households	2600	4500	14405	22728	27276
No. of Government Services Covered	7	8	11	11	3

**U= Urban Households; R= Rural Households; BPL= Below Poverty Line*

Source: CMS India Corruption Study, 2002-09

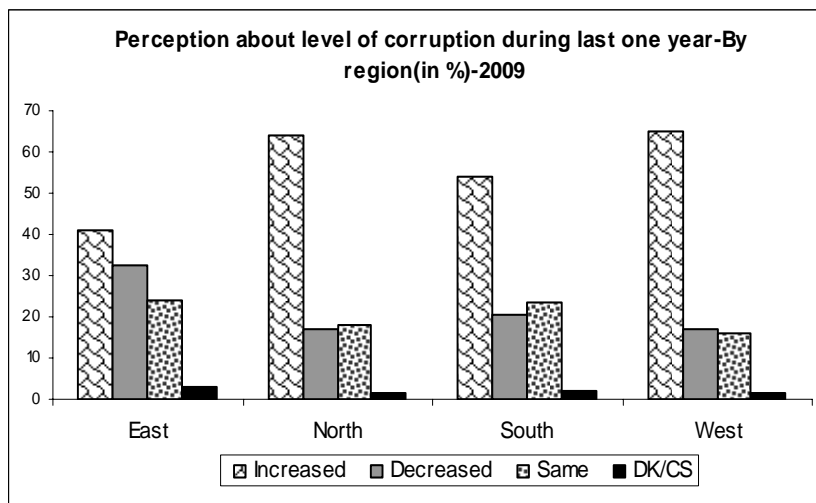
In each round, the coverage and target population varied; while 2002 and 2003 rounds covered only urban households, in 2005 round, it was a mix of urban and rural households but proportion of households from urban locations was more. In 2007, the study focused on below poverty line (BPL) households and more than three-fourth of the households were from rural areas. As far as number of services is concerned, it too increased with every round. While in 2002 it was 7, in 2007, the number of services covered increased to 11. The number of services to be covered in each round was arrived at after lot of consultations and deliberations with a panel of experts and eminent persons of different fields and in particular of the services covered.

In this round (2009), although the focus of the study was corruption in political elections, but it did capture households perception and experience about two public services, namely, Public Distribution System (PDS) and Hospital services. The two

services were selected on the basis of earlier rounds, where it was noticed that percentage of households interacting with these two services were more than other public services.

2.0 Perception about Corruption in Public Services

By State/Region- Among states, in Delhi more than 86 percent of the respondents felt that level of corruption in public services has increased in the last one year (2009). Other states, where more than two-third households reported increase in corruption were



Source: CMS India Corruption Study, 2009

Maharashtra (74%), Chhattisgarh (71%) and Tamil Nadu (70%). Regional variation in perception about the level of corruption in public services/departments is visible. While in states of western and northern region, around 67 percent of the respondents felt that there has been an increase in level of corruption compared to the preceding year, in states of Eastern region, only 40 percent of the households opined so; however the percentage of households noticing 'no change' i.e. level of corruption has remained same was more (24%) in Eastern region compared to other three regions.

Comparison between different rounds shows that the percentage of respondents reporting increase in corruption level is showing a downward trend. While in 2002 and 2005, as high as 95 percent and 92 percent households respectively, felt that the level of corruption has either increased or remained same compared to the previous year, in 2007, a little lesser percentage of BPL households (82%) had a similar perception. During last round (2009), the percentage of households holding similar opinion came down to 76 percent. In spite of initiatives to bring more transparency and accountability public service delivery system, the households holding the opinion that level of corruption has 'remained same' raises concern on the accessibility and effectiveness of the measures taken. Particularly for a very high percentage of BPL households, the situation as far as service delivery is concerned is no better than the last one year.

Perception about 'Corruption has...	ICS rounds			
	2002	2005	2007	2009
Increased	67	72	39	55
Remained same	28	21	43	21
Decreased	5	6	16	22
DK/CS		1	2	2

Source: CMS India Corruption Study, 2002-09

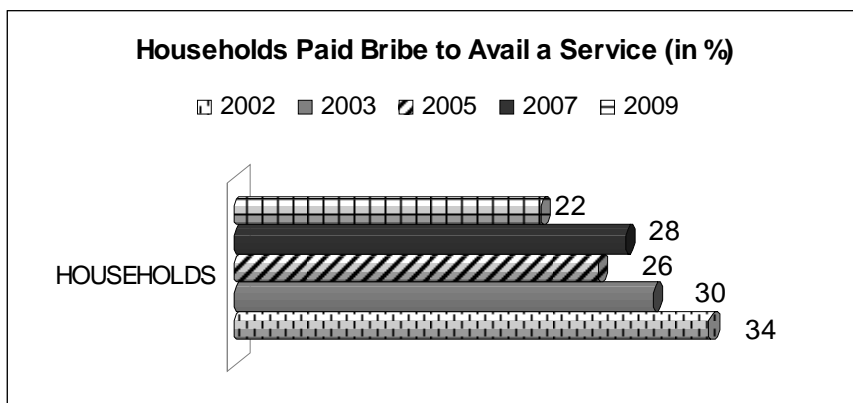
By Education- Respondents, who had attained graduation and above level of education seemed to be not satisfied with the initiatives taken to curb corruption, as around 60 percent of them felt that level of corruption has increased during the last one year (2008). In ICS 2007 conducted among BPL households, the percentage of graduates feeling that the level of corruption has increased compared to the preceding year was around 47 percent, while in the 2005 round, which was carried among

general population like in the present round, around 74 percent of the respondents with educational qualification of graduation and above had opined that the level of corruption has increased.

By Social Group- Among respondents belonging to OBC, around two-third felt that corruption has increased during the last one year. Compared to 2007 round with BPL population, the percentage of OBC households reporting so was much less (42%). This suggests that general population might have experienced such practices more than the BPL population; among other social groups too, a lesser percentage in 2007 compared to this round opined so (in 2008, between 50 and 55 vs. between 37 and 47, in 2007).

3.0 Households paid Bribe

At national level, this round of CMS survey shows that a little more than one out of five households had paid bribe to avail services of any government department during the last one year. On a positive note, compared to earlier rounds of ICS (2002-07), the percentage of households reported paying bribe has come down from 34 percent (2002) to 22 percent (2009).



Source: CMS India Corruption Study, 2002-09

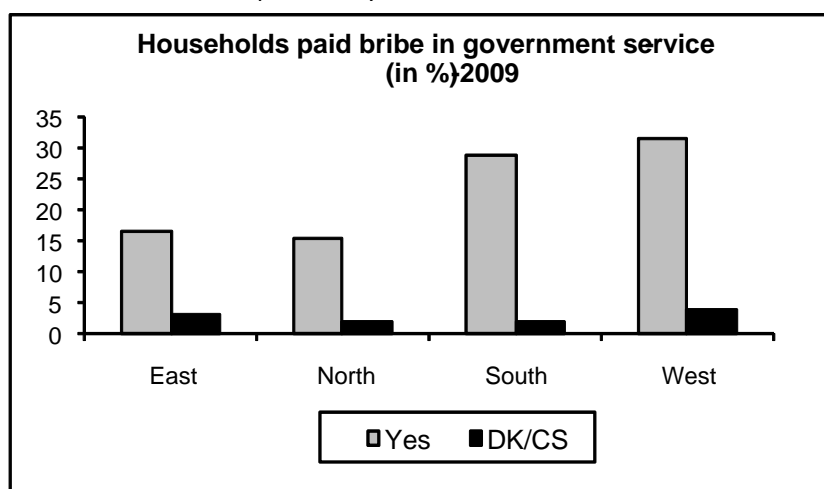
However, in some states, it is more than all-India average i.e. one out of every three households had to pay 'extra' money to avail the services. These include Karnataka (40%), Maharashtra (38%), Delhi (35%), Madhya Pradesh (30%), Tamil Nadu and Orissa (29% each)

Households reported paying bribe to avail any Public Service in the last one year-ICS 2009

In descending order

	State	Households paid bribe (in %)		State	Households paid bribe (in %)
1	Karnataka	40.1	11	Kerala	21.8
2	Maharashtra	38.0	12	Haryana	21.0
3	Delhi	35.5	13	Bihar	13.6
4	Madhya Pradesh	29.7	14	Punjab	13.6
5	Orissa	29.0	15	Jharkhand	12.9
6	Tamil Nadu	28.6	16	West Bengal	12.1
7	Uttarakhand	27.9	17	Uttar Pradesh	11.7
8	Andhra Pradesh	23.7	18	Assam	10.7
9	Chhattisgarh	23.4	19	Rajasthan	9.2
10	Gujarat	22.4			

Source: CMS India Corruption Study, 2009



Source: CMS India Corruption Study, 2009

Regional variation was also noticed as far as households reporting paying bribe in any government service during the last one year are concerned. It was highest in western region (32%) closely followed by southern region (29%).

However, in northern and eastern regions, the percentage of households reportedly paid bribe during the last one year was around 16 percent; just half of that reported in western and southern regions. This could be due to two reasons-one; lesser percentage of households interacts with government services in northern and eastern regions; two, households hesitate to reveal that they paid bribe for availing any government service.

By Social Group- Households while paying bribe neither got any 'concession' due to the social group to which they belong to nor were charged 'extra bribe'. This emerged from the finding of ICS 2008, where similar percentage of households, irrespective of the social group to which they belong to, reportedly paid bribe.

In addition to the overall perception and experience of the households about corruption in public services, the report does a comparative analysis of findings over last three rounds (2005, 2007, 2009) of India Corruption Study for two services, namely Public Distribution System and Hospital Services.

4.0 Public Distribution System in India evolved as a major instrument of government economic policy for ensuring availability of food grains to the public at affordable price as well as for ensuring food security for the poor. PDS, with a network of around 5 million Fair Price Shops (FPS), is perhaps the largest distribution network of its kind in the world, and is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State

Governments.¹ CMS in the previous three rounds of India Corruption Study covered the households who availed the services of PDS. The high dependence of the population, particularly the poor and marginalised ones, on this service could be gauged from the fact that as high as 88 percent in 2007 and 74 percent in 2009 interacted with the PDS service.

Public Distribution System	ICS rounds		
	2005	2007	2009
Households Interacted (in %)	45	88	74

Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2005-09

Perception about Corruption in PDS: Similar to the general perception about level of corruption, almost eight out of ten households felt that the level of corruption has either increased or remained during the last one year. Compared to 2005, 11 percentile increase in households reporting decrease in level of corruption was observed.

Level of Corruption in Public Distribution System has...	ICS rounds		
	2005	2007	2009
Increased	49	32	43
Remained same	39	46	34
Decreased	12	22	23

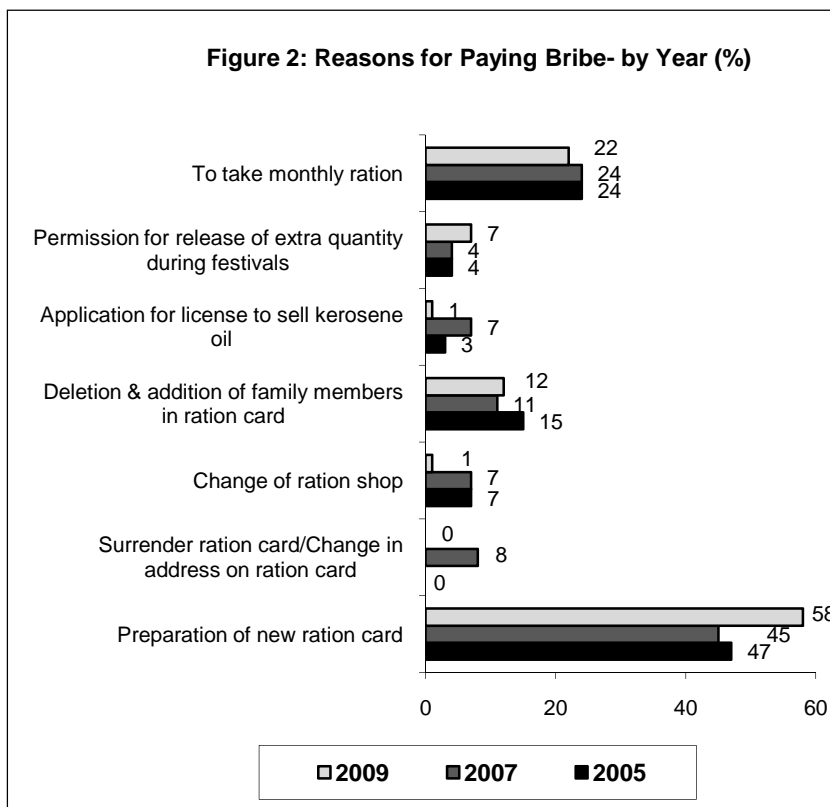
Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2005-09

Purpose/Reasons for paying Bribe

Among various reasons cited for paying bribe in the last three rounds of ICS, 'preparation of a new ration card' emerged as one of the major reasons. Other two reasons for which households

¹ Government of India: Annual Report, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, 2006-07
India Corruption Study: 2002-09

paid bribe were to take their monthly supply of ration from the fair price shop and for inclusion/deletion of names of family members from the ration card.



Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2005-09

Among states, where more than sixty percent or more of the households paid bribe for reasons like getting a new ration card is concerned, were Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Orissa (2009). However, exclusion on the basis of social group was not noticed as there was no relief for households while paying on the basis of social group.

The average amount paid by households to avail a particular service in PDS was Rs 101 with minimum being Rs 2 and maximum being Rs 600. In states like Madhya Pradesh, as low as Rs 2/= was paid. On being enquired households informed that the Fair Price Shop owner does not return the change while giving the monthly ration. On the other hand, households had to shell out as high as Rs 600-500 to get a new ration card, particularly a BPL ration card.

5.0 Hospital Services: For common man, public health facility is the main point of accessing health facilities. Since independence, Government of India has put substantial effort to provide free basic health care service to people in rural and from vulnerable sections. States are also trying to provide better health services with various schemes and many of them targeting the poor. However, going by recent data on the health status of the population, India is nearly at the same level as far as disease burden, anaemia, and child health is concerned.²

Hospital Services	ICS rounds		
	2005	2007	2009
Households Interacted (in %)	55	80	69

Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2005-09

Dependence on public health facilities is very high; 80 percent of BPL households (2007) and more than two-third of the households in the last round (2009) reportedly visited a government run health facility to avail a service.

² National Family Health Survey, India, 2005-06
India Corruption Study: 2002-09

Perception about corruption: Under NRHM and other government-run schemes, availability of services at public health facilities might have improved but it seems that access to services has also led to increase in level of corruption. Comparatively, the percentage of households, which felt that level of corruption has increased or remained same during the reference period of last one year, has improved. While in 2007, 92 percent opined so, in 2009 it came down to 78 percent. The findings show significant change in terms of decrease in level of corruption in hospital services between 2005 and 2009.

Level of Corruption in Hospital services has...	ICS rounds		
	2005	2007	2009
Increased	73	25	44
Remained same	19	50	34
Decreased	7	25	22

Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2005-09

In 2009, the states where more than half of the households felt that corruption in hospital services has gone up were Delhi (83%), Maharashtra (65%), Uttar Pradesh (58%), Uttarakhand (54%), Rajasthan (53%) and West Bengal (52%).

In 2009, the percentage of households reportedly paid bribe to avail the services at a public health facility was 9 percent. The percentage of BPL households (2007) which paid bribe or could not avail services at a government health centre as they could not pay bribe was 11 percent. In other words, more BPL households agreeing to pay bribe shows their high dependence on government facilities for health treatment.

Reasons for Paying Bribe-Hospital Services

Comparison of the last three rounds of India Corruption Study brings out that the main reasons for which households had to pay bribe was 'to get beds' in the hospitals or 'for getting medicines'.

These two facilities available free of cost in a public health facility is the reason for poor households to pay bribe and try to get the family member admitted as in-patient or get the medicines prescribed by the doctor from the government health centre itself. For them, going to a private hospital for treatment is mostly the last option, as they could not afford to bear the treatment expenses. Similarly, buying medicines from the market would mean that they had to shell out more money.

Various studies on indebtedness have also brought out that one of the main reasons for the poor and marginalised households to borrow money at a very high rate of interest from the money lenders is to meet the medical expenses of the members of the family. They had to do so when the treatment facility is not available at a public health centre.

Reasons for Paying Bribe	ICS rounds		
	2005	2007	2009
As in-patient/ For getting beds	22	34	32
For medicine	29	11	33
As out-patient	17	15	7
For Diagnostic Services	13	12	14

Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2005-09

6.0 Notes for Votes: Corruption in Indian Elections

A set of studies points to the growing extent of the corrupt practice in Indian elections — and shows that where parties are cadre-based and have high loyalty levels, its incidence is lower than elsewhere.

Has “notes for votes” become a phenomenon to reckon with in election campaigns, or is it only an isolated practice confined to a few places? The Lok Sabha itself witnessed a shocking notes-for-votes episode in 2008, and has it now become a poll practice? In the last fortnight of March 2009 there were more than a dozen instances of television news channels showing cash in large quantities being transported or distributed by political leaders in the context of the elections.

Earlier, the distribution of currency notes for votes used to happen after the election campaign ended officially. Now, even four weeks ahead of the poll date it is in evidence.

Cash comes into play in three distinct phases: it is given to party leaders by candidates seeking a nomination; it is given to cadres and competitors on the eve of the filing of nominations; and it is distributed to voters on poll-eve.

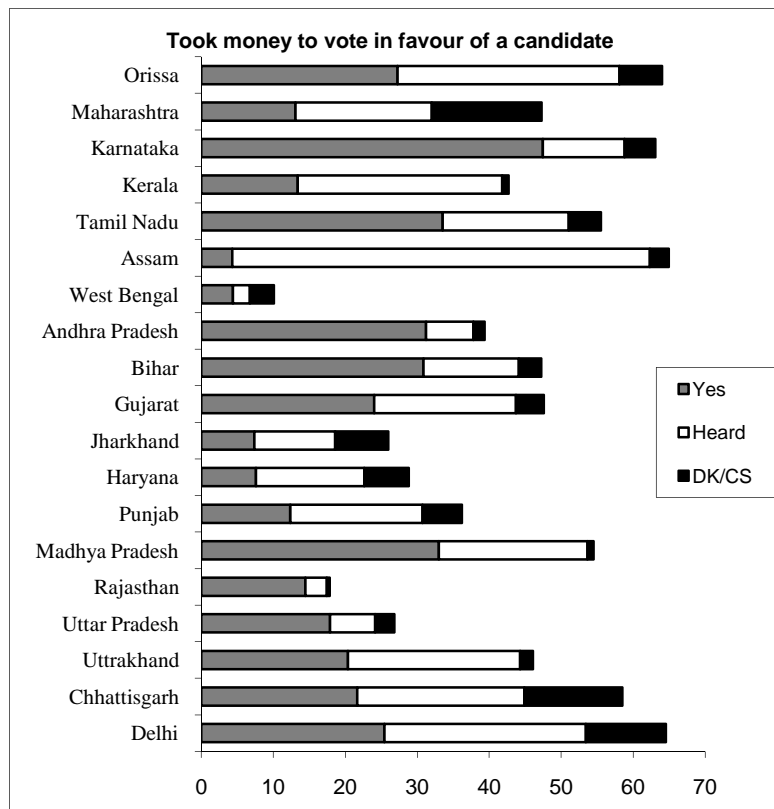
There has been no empirical study on this issue; however CMS undertook such a study at three different points over the last couple of years. In 2007, as part of a study on corruption involving below poverty line (BPL) families, CMS made a study on the percentage of voters who had ever received cash in return for votes. It covered 23,000 BPL households in 29 States. Realising that the malaise was not confined to the poor, in 2008 CMS did a study among 18,000 voters in 19 States. In a third round, CMS did

an exploratory study in December 2008 in eight intensely fought Assembly by-elections in Karnataka to find out how candidates of different parties gave out money. Together, these surveys showed that a high percentage of voters were being paid.

Going by these studies it appears that while in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar muscle power is more at work, in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu money power is unleashed. Interestingly, it was in these southern States that political parties had more poll surveys conducted and more TV channels had devoted time to cover poll campaigns, including instances of notes-for-votes and other offers in kind.

The CMS study brought out the fact that the notes-for-votes phenomenon had spread across all sections irrespective of age group, income level and educational level, in urban and rural settings. Where the parties are relatively more cadre-based and party loyalties are higher, as in the case of Left-ruled States, the percentage of voters involved in notes-for-votes acts is lower than elsewhere.

A much higher percentage of voters in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh acknowledged receiving cash as an inducement “in the last 10 years” than in Bihar or Uttar Pradesh. The amount involved in these northern States was much less than in the southern States. The 2009 Assembly-cum-Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh could well be the most “expensive” ever in India: nearly half the voters, it is expected, will be given Rs. 500 or more per vote.



Indeed, notes-for-votes is the “mother of all corruption” because it is here that the vicious cycle starts. The voter does not realise that for every Rs. 10 that comes from a candidate as a lure for votes, he or she ends up paying five to 10 times more annually as bribe to avail of basic services that a citizen is entitled to from government service-providers. Thus, notes-for-votes has a direct effect on governance.

Interestingly, there is no evidence of instances of notes-for-votes having had any impact on voter turnout. Perhaps this is because cash is distributed not on the basis of any demands for it being made by voters but it is done by candidates owing to local competition in a given contest. Also, more and more candidates are new or unfamiliar faces, or those who live far from the

India Corruption Study: 2002-09 15

constituency, or those who have made their money rather quickly, or those who have unaccounted money. No other factor can explain this phenomenon of “competitive politics.” The effects of the cash-for-votes phenomenon include depriving the true representatives of the people of any chance to get themselves elected on the basis of a contest with a level playing field.

These enquiries, together with reports carried by some news channels, indicate that election-related favours have inflated poll expenditure in India by five times or more since 2004.

Concerned about the malaise, the Election Commission has taken certain initiatives recently. It has been appointing “expenditure observers” to track and validate expenditure on various kinds of campaign activity. It has made it obligatory for candidates to file expenditure statements a couple of times during the campaign period. The provision that candidates must file these statements within a specified period after an election has existed for some time. But there is no evidence that this has made any difference. The Commission, for the first time, has disqualified a number of candidates who did not file their expenditure statements for the earlier election from filing their nominations in 2009. The Commission confiscated more than Rs. 40 crore in cash that was being transported for distribution during the Karnataka Assembly elections in 2008. Beyond that, its actions have not been known to be deterrents. Even the police are on alert now. More than all this, it is the media’s vigilance that has been exposing the practice. But, then, some experts would say the more such news reports appear on TV channels, the more is the spread of the practice, with the amounts involved only growing and voter expectations growing as well.

The best bet is for voters themselves to reject the lure. They need to understand the linkage between notes-for-votes and the bribes citizens end up paying to get what they are entitled to get from the government and from their elected representatives. Civil society groups should step up their efforts at the local level against voters being lured. And, the Election Commission should come up with more deterrent measures. Only then will the poll process become truly free and fair.

7.0 Some Households Pay Anyway

A comparison of households, which reported decrease in corruption in public services and at the same time paid bribe, reflects that few households though admitted that there has been decrease in corruption but had to pay bribe or extra money to avail the services, as the corruption has not yet wiped out of the system. Among the households reporting decrease in level of corruption, around 11 percent in this round (2009) paid bribe; this percentage was lesser in the last round (2007), conducted amongst BPL population of the country (7%). In other words, it suggests that better-off households do not mind paying bribe to avail the service, since they could afford (paying bribe). This is irrespective of overall decrease or otherwise of corruption in the public services.

Households felt level of Corruption has decreased but Paid Bribe

ICS Round	Households feeling DECREASE in level of corruption during the <u>last one year</u>	Households reportedly PAID BRIBE to avail services of any government department during the <u>same period</u> out of those who reported DECREASE in level of corruption
	%	%
2007	16	7
2009	22	11

Source: CMS India Corruption Study 2007 and 2009

8.0 Six Pointers for Action: 2010 & beyond

The rounds of India Corruption Study conducted across the country in the first ten years of this millennium, the 21st Century, brings to the glaring light the fact that corruption has become an almost essential part of government services. For a common man or *aam aadmi*, paying out bribe has become essential and feels surprised if they do not have to pay bribe to avail a public service. Undoubtedly, transparency and accountability has gone up because of several measures like e-governance (use of ICT), RTI and Social Audit to name some but due to lack of awareness amongst the people about how to use and where to go to avail these services, the corrupt practices continue to exist in the public service delivery system.

The recent efforts by the Central and State governments to put in place a stringent monitoring system for the PDS to check leakages of food grains is a welcome step. States are expected to replicate successful models of PDS strengthening wherever the system is weak. Further, to address the corrupt practices in the two services, namely PDS and Hospital services, and during elections, the suggested priority areas for action should be

- **Launching intensive awareness drive** among people about their rights such as using RTI to ask for information during failure in service delivery as well as on available facilities such as food grains entitlement and price (PDS) or monetary benefits under JSY and free medicines (hospital services). The state-run schemes needs to be frequently advertised using new mediums like mobile phone services apart from regular mediums of communication.

- **Online services** for generation of documents like ration card or medical certificates among others should be made available across the country. The households should be allowed to send required residence and identification proofs through post/courier services. Such facility will have two benefits, one, will reduce the pressure on service providers and two, will ensure fewer interactions between service providers and service seekers, as earlier rounds of CMS India Corruption Study have shown that more interactions between providers and seekers is one of the reasons for presence of corrupt practices in government offices.
- **Computerization of PDS** services so that households could avail services from any Fair Price Shop across the country by showing the digitalized ration card. Such cards will contain unique ID number and details of family members as well as their food entitlements. Migrant population, mostly the below poverty line households, will be able to avail the facilities of PDS from anywhere in the country.
- **Packed food grains at PDS-** Food grains in packs of 500 gms, 1 kg and 5 Kg (or even more) should be introduced. Packed at state or district level, these packets of food grains should be distributed at Fair Price Shops as per entitlement of a household to avoid malpractices in weighing. This will also ensure the quality of food grains being distributed at FPS.
- **RSBY- How, where and when to approach?** Services under *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana* (RSBY) should be publicized intensively. Studies have shown that subscribers (households) are not yet aware about the process involved in availing benefits under RSBY. Expansion of RSBY to include more and more households in its ambit as well as ensuring better services in empanelled private facilities should be closely monitored.

- **Sensitizing voters-** Specific to elections, based on a process research conducted in a focused manner to identify pockets/community groups within constituencies, the Election Commissions at Central and state levels, should organize/facilitate campaigns to sensitize voters so that they do not get lured by the cash and other 'gifts' distributed by the candidates during election period.

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