

1. Introduction:

1.1 With the fading out of stalwarts like Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, Mahatma Gandhi, Nasser, Nehru, Sukarno etc., who had adorned the international scene around the time of the Second World War, as also the gradual emergence of materialism, both developing and advanced nations have experienced a degradation of moral values. It is generally seen that no country, whether capitalist or socialist, has remained untouched by the evil of corruption, which has attained alarming proportions.

If we restrict ourselves to the Indian scene, no political party can claim to be totally free of this malaise.

1.2 This tendency towards corrupt practices cannot be said to be restricted only to government, but is also widespread in co-operative, private and corporate sectors. In fact, it would not be an exaggerated statement to say that it is now a part of everyday life.

1.3 There is one qualitative difference between corruption in developed countries and that in developing countries like India. In developed countries the common man is not affected by corruption in his day to day transactions and corruption in society is indirectly revealed through some scandal. On the other hand, in developing countries corruption is felt at all levels and ~~the common man~~ the common man is affected or faces evils of corruption in day to day life. Though the objective is to eradicate corruption at all

levels, the first priority is to cleanse the government machinery with which the common man interacts most.

1.4 Thus, it is necessary to tackle eradication of corruption at three different levels.

1.4.1 Corruption in society at large

To control this corruption, it is necessary to get cooperation from different strata of society. Educational and social institutions, voluntary organisations and government need to join hands to improve the moral fibre. Government of Maharashtra has taken a step in this direction by introducing moral education in schools.

1.4.2 Corruption in political life

It has been generally accepted that lacunae in the existing electoral law are responsible for this corruption. Reforms in this area can only be initiated by the Central government. Such efforts will be fully supported by Government of Maharashtra.

Besides reforming the electoral law, political parties need to take the initiative for curbing undesirable tendencies and practices. If conventions like not allotting tickets to persons with criminal background, declaring one's property before occupying a public office are established by all parties, the situation will definitely improve. Only legislation is not enough in these areas as is evident from the experience of the anti-defection law.

1.4.3 Corruption in government/administration

The efforts by government so far to eradicate corruption have been restricted to government and semi-government machinery. Though there cannot be an effective check on corruption in administration without tackling the social and political arenas, an effort has been made in this paper to focus mainly on the third level.

1.5 In order to prepare this white paper, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra convened a series of meetings with senior officials of the concerned departments. It was also decided that views should be ascertained and suggestions invited from social organisations, associations of persons interacting with government, distinguished citizens, and the public. Accordingly, open suggestions were invited through the newspapers. The Chief Secretary and Director General (Anti-Corruption), held separate meetings with various organisations and respected functionaries. The suggestions received through these various sources have been given due consideration while preparing this draft.