Factors and roots of administrative corruption from Islam point of view

Seyyed Vahid Shalbaf Yazdi

HRM, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

ABSTRACT

No one has born sinful. Unbalanced social and economical conditions cause corruption. Official corruption is one issue that has been a matter to humans during the history of mankind and today governments, nations and organizations are struggling with it. This destructive issue is the cause of wasting resources and creating problems in systems especially in governmental ones. It is also one reason that prevents countries from development. Some of this corruption is unwanted and nations have different view points toward this problem. Islam, the most complete religion, is basically against any corruption and emphasizes the importance of pureness and right doing. This emphasis has some clear and strict dimensions where it is related to people rights and mentions the necessity of divine limits and people rights. Islam has considers a great necessity for the government officials to be honest and reliable. In the present study it has been tried to recognize the roots of corruption from Islamic point of view and consider ways in order to prevent this corruption from being widespread

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Introduction

No one has born sinful. Unbalanced social and economical conditions cause corruption. It is clear that when in a society there is no social, economical and political insurance and also no hope for the future among people, social insurance will be replaced by self insurance. Beside this self insurance there are other motivations that cause people and political parties to have a positive point of view toward this issue. Administrative corruption is one issue that has been a matter to humans during the history of mankind and today governments, nations and organizations are struggling with it. This destructive issue is the cause of wasting resources and creating problems in systems especially in governmental ones. It is also one reason that prevents countries from development. Some of this corruption is unwanted and nations have different view points toward this problem. Costs that are being caused by official corruption are considerable. These costs annually make up for about 500 billion dollars of the companies, organizations and people properties all over the world (Mortazavi, 2000). Studying corruption is important not only because it has been growing but also because it can be worst in future (Hariss, 1996).

Based on a report from Transparanct international Organization (TIO), according to official corruption, from among 133-145 country Iran has the rank of 77-93. Based on this report from a rank of 0-10 Iran is about 7.3. In our country because of the existence of Islamic point of view, official corruption is of great importance and some law has been passed to deal with this problem and the government has been forced to use all its efforts and abilities to fight with official corruption. But passing these laws alone is not enough and we need more strict laws not only to fight with this problem but also to prevent it. Generally prevention is more important than punishment.

In planning the fourth development program the Islamic leader of Iran considered the purification of official organizations as one the most important issues based on rule 110 of the constitution. The Islamic committee of Iran has also paid great attention to this issue. The committee of ministers has also approved a letter on 2004/3/10 that considers "the purification and strengthening of the government by preventing corruption " and sent to all organizations and ministries in order to focus on issues such as clearing the budgets, avoid centered activities, creating an equal system of salary, decreasing the inappropriate interference of the government with economics, fighting with financial crimes and speculative actions, giving people the right to observe the government and official organizations' actions, so that they can fight with corruption. Therefore several bills have been passed such as: the bill of law amendment that considers the ministers and employees no to interfere with the national trading and exchange, the bill of personalization, the bill against monopoly, the plan in order for the tenders to be held clearly and amendment of the public computation of the country that help with the prevention of corruption.

Islam, the most complete religion, is basically against any corruption and emphasizes the importance of pureness and right doing. This emphasis has some clear and strict dimensions where it is related to people rights and mentions the necessity of divine limits and people rights. Islam has considered a great necessity for the government officials to be honest and reliable.

Types of corruption

Corruption can be categorized into three types: political corruption, law corruption, and official corruption. Corruption can be economical (financial), political and administrative (Farhadinejad, 2001).

Economical corruption covers all behaviors and misbehaviors that cause disorder and problem in economy, economical organizations (large or small), and the economy of the country. Economical corruption occurs in a market like situation and is related to trading goods and cash which is the basic element of official corruption. Transferring resources is not only by the way of goods or cash but in a social situation trading is related to several cultural and moral conceptions. In a wider sense financial corruption is called social trading or social corruption that is a factor for customer finding. Customer finding is trading financial benefits but it cannot be limited to

Tele:
E-mail addresses: vshalbaf@yahoo.com

this point because it has a wider cultural and social conception.

Political corruption is the use of political power for illegal personal benefits. Political corruption is the gain of illegal personal benefits through political or governmental power. This definition can be different based on time, place and different culture in different countries and is as old as the history of nations, political culture and political schools of thought. Political corruption is under the influence of political situation of each country.

Administrative corruption can be financial or non-financial. For non-financial corruption we can consider an employee, for example, who uses other people in order to improve his social rank and support in society. A person who is involved with official corruption sees his workplace as a business corporation in order to earn maximum income as a result his department would be like business market and will be governed by job market rules. The amount of his income would be dependent on job market conditions, the service he provides for his customers and his talent for finding customers who can increase his income in an illegal way. Administrative corruption is not necessarily considered as the act of breaking the law. Societies in which there are no laws or rules against corruption actually do not have any laws to be broken. In these cases corruption is seen as an immoral behavior (Talisayon, 1998).

Based on Islamic point of view corruption can be administrative, social, political, and economical: during all periods of time a society needs a special official organization that take care of the society. Islam has always emphasized on principals which must be applied in all aspects of a society (Ebn al asir, 1049).

Islam principals and values against corruption

Islam, the most complete religion, is basically against any corruption and emphasizes the importance of pureness and right doing. This emphasis has some clear and strict dimensions where it is related to people rights and mentions the necessity of divine limits and people rights. Islam has considered a great necessity for the government officials to be honest and reliable.Corruption has been frequently mentioned in Quran.

Imam Ali's (pbuh) fight against corruption is completely vivid in Nahjol Balaghe. This fight has been shown in different ways, sometimes by punishing a governor who accepted the rich invitation for ignoring the justice, by punishing a governor who misused people's right and by conveying dissatisfaction for someone who demand more of people's right. The wise comments of Imam Ali (pbuh) can be a guide for all people who are searching for justice.

Here are some more:

Justice is the best personality trait.

Justice causes the rules of God to survive.

The day of justice would be more difficult to a cruel than the day he ignored justice.

Justice and kindness is the highest Islamic belief.

Do you people want me conquer my kingdom by cruelty? I swear to God that I would never do such a thing. If it was my property I would distribute it among people with justice but it is not, it is all God's property. Donating properties in an unfair manner may make you popular among people but it would make you mean in God's face.

I swear to God that I will help the weak against the cruel and I will demand the cruel for the weak rights.

Avoid having properties for yourself while they belong to all people equally.

Try to be fair to all people so that no one can accuse you to be cruel toward the weak and so the weak would not be disappointed from your justice.

Do not come to me with injustice and unfairness.

I swear to God that if I realize you (a governor) have used people's rights and properties for your own benefit, even a small amount, I will make it so hard for you that you would live in misery.

You know that the governor of an Islamic society and the leader of Muslims should not be a person who wishes for people's property for his own benefit. He should not be a person with little knowledge of Islamic rules and principles; he should not be a cruel who commits bribery, he should not be a person who ignores rules of God.

He would not obey the rules of God unless he would avoid bribery, set ups with enemies and greed.

In one of his letters to Malek Ashtar, Imam Ali (pbuh) said: this religion once was captured in cruel hands they were capricious and misused their powers in name of Islam.

He also stated that: the reason that we fight against some Muslims today, is that corruption and misdeem has entered Islam.

As has been mentioned so far there is a lot to talk in this case and it would be impossible to think of Imam Ali (pbuh) apart from justice and justice apart from him. The emphasis on justice in his period of time and all times is of special value (Ali, pbuh, Nahjol Balaghe).

Based on Islam there is a close relationship among government corruption, governors and corruption among people of a society. If governors be corrupted then the people will turn to corruption as well and vice versa and if the righteous governors stand against the corrupted people they will be dethroned and some profligate governors will be chosen. This is an undeniable fact that would be clear to everyone with a little thought and for which there is lots of evidence in the history of mankind.

The reason for Imam Ali to accept to rule was to fight with corruption, cruelty, rebellious, injustice and to fight for the people rights. He also aimed to create a true and thorough Islamic government. His attitude toward the government, governors, people's right, the budget, public properties, the power of the government, the responsibility of the Islamic leader and his behavior with people, honesty, consciousnesses, God's rules, helping people, encouraging good will and discouraging bad behavior , fighting for people's right, creating justice, fighting corruption, preventing from corruption spread, purifying techniques, purifying managers and governors, supervising all affaires, questioning managers and governors, clarity, managing power in an Islamic society, employing honest and efficient employees, creating an effective, conservative, fruitful, organized and reliable government, avoiding corruption, avoiding the employment of arrogant, imperious, violent, inefficient, sycophant , greedy managers is clear in all of his wise advice.

Four things are the signs of governments' downfall: ignoring the basic Islamic principle, sticking to sideway, giving priority to mean people and oust honest people.

There is a great divine test in front and the society has a great revolution on the way, those who promoted unfairly should be ousted and those virtuous who ousted must be back again.

The great danger that threatens the managers and governors of Islamic societies is not misusing the power they have but it is the effort to find a legal excuse for misusing this power in order

to reach peace and it can be the beginning of committing bigger crimes. One of these innovations can be finding an excuse to disobey the God's and Imams' rules.

In Nahjol balaghe Imam Ali (pbuh) criticizes these actions and behaviors severely in different sermons like 16, 18, 88, and letters 38, 53, 54,123,192,233, and so on. Imam Ali considers these behaviors as the cause of discord, weakness and downfall.

Definitions of corruption

In Dehkhoda dictionary (1990) corruption has been defined as: ruin, being against the good behavior, seizing someone's property by force, misdeed and wickedness.

Falling something out of balance can be corruption.

It also has been defines as: seizing someone's property by force and cruelty, being against amendment. So fighting against corruption can be purging everything from corruption. (Amendment means fighting against corruption, fighting against abnormalities)

Damage or corruption comes from the Latin word (rumpere) that means to break. So when there is damage or corruption something breaks or is being denied (Safari & Naebi, 2002, p145). The thing that breaks can be a behavior or a rule (Management and Planning Organization of the Country, p2).

Sardari (2002) defines corruption as an illegal prize that is given to someone (government official) to encourage that person to violate the rules of his job.

Isfahani and Ragheb(2001) define corruption as a kind of misdeed that affects all aspects in a great deal and ruins the societies that suffers from weakness.

Definitions of administration

The word *administration* literally means, to direct, to organize, to lead or guide, to manage or to run a task or a job and a business. In politics the word *administration* does not have a long story behind and it generates from the word (edaral shei) that means to circulate something and the reason is that in offices and organizations letters and files are always circulating among departments and each job or task is done by a different department. Today the word *administration* let's say management is being used in two way, organizational and occupational.

Organizational meaning:

A group of organizations work under the supervision of the country's authorities. These authorities include central powers like the leader of the country the president, the ministers, the governors general, and their counselors and non-central powers like public organizations.

Occupational meaning:

Management is an effort made by the mentioned authorities in order to be at people's service and in case of disobeying the laws or the rules they will be ousted (sharif al ghorshi, 1980).

Administration corruption

Hangtington (1992) defines *administration* corruption as the behavior of those staff of the public organizations that breaks the law or the rules to their own personal benefits.

Gonar mirdal believes that *administration* corruption has many facets such as using someone's occupational power or social rank for illegal intentions (zahedi, 2000, p: 283).

Transparency International Organization defines corruption as: misusing governmental power for personal benefits, in Iran this definition is called official corruption. Langseth (1998) defines corruption as using power for personal official benefits under the influence of relationship or family interests (ziyadlu, 2000, p: 24).

Legal definition of corruption: illegal using of official/ organizational power for personal benefits. Theobald defines

official harm as illegal using of power for personal benefits (Theobald, 1990, p: 2).

Administrative corruption is the abusing of governmental sources during a process by a government Administrative (Gould, 1991, 470). It is also defines as the actions of some governmental officials, first for damaging the social benefits and second for achieving personal benefits by paying or hiring someone to do the illegal actions (rogow,1970,p:54).

Tanzi believes that a manager or a government official is affected by official harm or corruption when he makes decisions based on considering his personal benefits, family relations and social interests (Tanzi, 1994, p: 3).
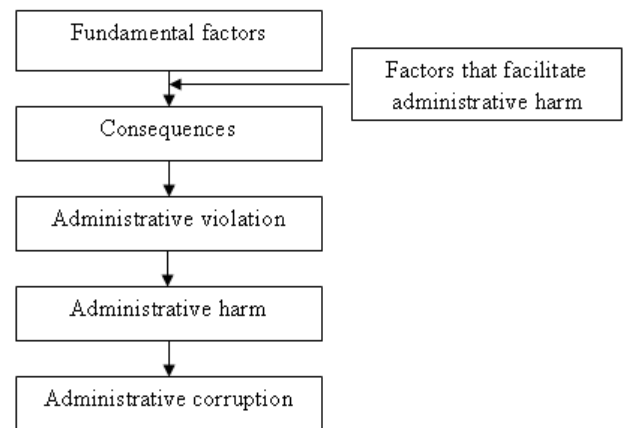

Figure 1. (Tanzi, 1994, p: 3)

Church, an American senator, calls official corruption the society cancer. Official corruption is truly similar to cancer that grows within the underlying layers of a society and weakens the body and destroys it. It incapacitates the government and finally it would be incurable and ruins the body completely.

In order to find the roots and underlying reasons of official corruption, the process of corruption occurrence in the society needs to be considered first and then based on this process some solutions must be found to prevent and fight with this corruption. Researchers have put forward four solutions in order to prevent official corruption (madanchian, 2004):

1. *Scientific approach*: based on this solution, with the help of common sciences especially humanistic science, it is necessary to find out what corruption is in nature, the reasons of corruption occurrence and ways to prevent and fight with it (based on scientific findings).

2. *Experimental approach*: this solution is based on the experiments which have been done in the past that includes challenges, and also strengths and weak points of the previous movements to find a proper way to prevent and fight against corruption.

3. *Value-based approach*: in this case corruption is being fought by enjoying the Islamic and national sources.

4. *Comparative approach*: using the experiences of other countries, international corporations and nations which have had the same problem.

In general it can be said that there are different factors in forming and stabilizing corruption. In this paper the factors that cause corruptions have been studied based on an Islamic point of view.

Roots of official corruption from an Islamic point of view

From an Islamic point of view official corruption is the illegal use of social power or rank for personal benefits and interests. Official managers who misuse their power cause this corruption to grow and bring abnormality to the society. From *a social point of view* corruption is: bribery, ignoring peoples' right, employing dishonest and inefficient managers and ousting

the honest managers. From *a political point of view* corruption is: employing managers based on political parties' interests and supporting political wrongdoers and crimes. From *an economical point of view* corruption is: embezzlement, selling natural resources and factories to one's own relatives, selling information to some special parties and groups, giving projects to inefficient contractors and the worst of all, being involved in drug trafficking or supporting drug traffickers (farokhsersht, 2003).

The following reasons are the cause of corruption from an Islamic point of view:

Being an obedient to your passion or lust

In Islam it is believed that most social problems arise from disregarding peoples' rights and following one's own earthy desires that there is no end to it. These desires are the main reason of corruption and crime in government organizations. God promise salvation to those who keep themselves away from greed and avarice and encourage people to righteousness and discourage them from misdeed and to those who are aware of God's limits and give promising news to Muslims.

In sermon 47 Imam Ali (pbuh) recommends his governors: be fearful of God and be fearful of being attracted to this earthy life and desires even if they come after you.

Disregarding efficient and honest managers

Imam Ali (pbuh) recommends his governors: observe what your employees do and then after you have trusted them put them in charge, do not assign power based on relations as it is unfair and the injustice. The base for an Islamic society to flourish and succeed is the honesty and efficiency of managers and governors. Our prophet Mohammed (pbuh) has emphasized on employing efficient, honest and righteous managers. Putting in charge the inefficient and dishonest relatives and kin of one's is one of the blights that corrupts and destroys the organizations. And whenever it happens there would be cruelty in the society and it would be so hard to people as the kin of the leader think of themselves as being clear of any blame and sin and make it hard for the weak.

Besides the attitude that the kin of leader have, if the leader himself oppresses his people and the weak it is evident that a huge disaster would happen and life would be so hard to the weak.

The governor prior to Imam Ali was ruling in that cruel way. He assigned his kin and his friends who were inefficient, very important government positions. Valid-ebne-oghbe, his half brother- from his mother side- was the governor of kufe. As soon as Imam Ali chaired, he ousted the cruel an inefficient governors and assigned positions to people based on their efficiency and honesty. Assigning positions to dishonest and inefficient people is something that Islam fight with seriously.

Not paying the right salary

Because the amount of salary and in governmental organizations is not enough to meet the needs of efficient and righteous employees, it would be a good idea to pay some bonus to these employees in other to help to keep them. Rafipoor (2001, p: 267) has compared the relationship between the need level and salary in his book the Development and Contradiction (antithesis) as it is shown the figure 2:

Imam Ali has paid great attention to these points in Maleke-ashtar's indenture and emphasizes the organizational and official amendment of his government and says: increase their provisions so their power would grow and then they would try to purge themselves and make them needless so they would never reach for other's properties and if they disobey you it would be

clear to them that they betrayed your trust. Imam Ali also advises about a righteous judge:
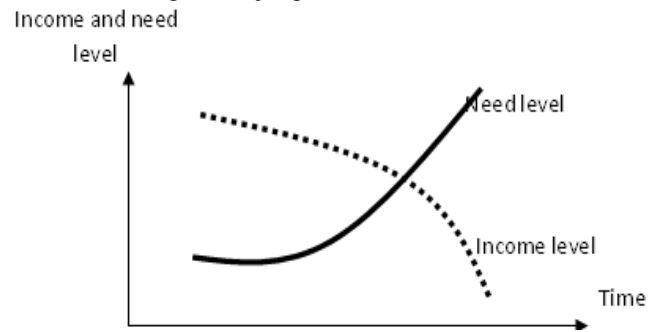
Figure 2. The Relationship between Income & need level

In order for the governors to stay away from defalcation and rapine of the people's right and property Imam Ali says: you can have a fix amount from this Zakat and you have some poor people around you who are in need. We pay all your rights and salary and we want you to pay all their rights in return.

Today the people's financial need is growing and people are trying more and more to meet these needs and money plays the most important role for people. So what would be a solution for those who cannot earn enough money to meet their needs and there are no legal ways for them to earn more money. There has been some research on people's need level and their salary, especially among employees, and it is clear that during the last few years there has been no balance between the need level and salary actually it has been reversed due to the inflation growth (according to graph the need level is increasing but salary cannot overcome this need).

Imam Ali believes that compensating the work and effort of employees as one the most important factors in management he also believes that in order to prevent employees from turning to corruption and it is necessary to pay their salary fairly.

Imam Ali advises Maleke Ashtar about the employees' salary and says: pay them their salary completely because it gives them power and strength to do their job honestly and so they will not turn to corruption.

The structure of ownership

Investigating the government and private organizations has shown that the goals and kind of ownership is different in these organizations. In spite of government organizations the goals of private organizations is based on profit. Ownership in government organizations is for the public but in private organizations it is individualistic or as having shares (Babajani, 1997, p: 12).

It can be said that these goals and the kind of ownership can affect the kind of corruption. Corruption in government organization is shown as the following (Karrahi, 2003, p: 45):

Corruption= monopoly + authority of replication

The hypothesized pattern of official corruption including structural and conceptual dimension can be shown as the following (figure 3.) (ziyadlu, 2003, p: 62):
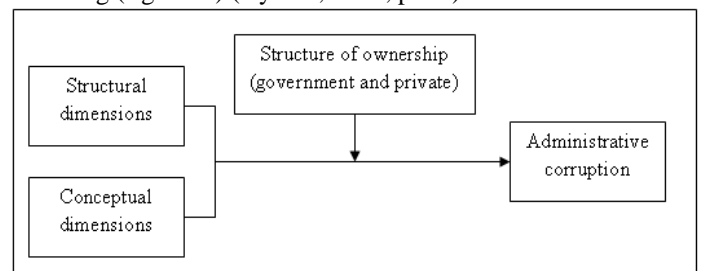
Figure 3. Pattern of official corruption

Lack of clarity and replication in administrative activities

Lack of clarity is one the important factors in causing official corruption. Official corruption can not happen in organizations that enjoy clarity, informing people at the right time and creating a system of replication can prevent corruption. Ambiguity in rules is a way for those who are involved in official corruption and look for the right time to pave the way for corruption. Besides clarity the consolidation of morality can help to prevent corruption. So consolidation of morality and white blowing is emphasized in order to recognized illegal activities in official organizations. When observing illegal acts, it should be reported to people who are in charge and if they don't do anything to tackle the problem it is right to reveal it to the public (Abbaszadegan, 2004, p: 30).

Weakness in monitoring and lack of decree

Misusing Beitolmal (people's right), Zakat and taxes can harm the roots of the society and cause corruption.

Imam Ali (pbuh) started fighting with this serious and contagious disease as soon he chaired. During the time when Imam was the governor he used to fight against any corrupts administrative as soon as he realizes it or receives a report. Just like he did to Ziad-ebne- obiye in Fars, Yazid-ebne- gheis in Isfehan and Manzae-ebne-jarodabdi in Fars, Estakhr.

Lack of stability in judgment and utilizing wrong judgment because of the lack of balance between the crime and punishment

During the time when Imam Ali was the governor, he emphasized the necessity for the right judgment and advised on the importance of judgment and tried hard to strengthen the judicial matters and paved the way for making the complicated ways of judgment clear. He also helped the judges to realize their weaknesses and observed their acts in order to prevent justice from being suppressed and governors from being affected by greed and bribery. These issues are clear in Imam's wise order to Maleke Ashtar:

Choose best people of yours to judge among people. Choose those who are patient and do not lose their temper when facing the hostility and struggle between the two sides of the fight. Choose people who do not insist on ignoring their weakness and faults and when finding their faults they confess and try to eradicate them. Choose people who do not tend to greed and try hard to realize the truth, people who are very cautious when facing ambiguity and are very determined in finding the truth. Choose those who can not be deceived by compliments and those who never ignore the truth and indeed such people are hard to find.

Imam also emphasizes the sensitivity of this job as a judge and how these judges should be monitored and also be respected in order for them to be safe from others greed and bad intentions of the enemies.

According to Imam Ali, judges should:

1. Be from among the best
2. Be patient and good tempered
3. Be knowledgeable enough for making sound and fair judgments
4. Be brave to accepts their mistakes and correct them.
5. Not lose their temper easily and be in full control of them.
6. Be brave and not be afraid of the powerful.
7. Ignore the system of values

There is another point of view that considers intercommunication in behavior And believes that system of values and stabilized social factors are the reason of official corruption and considers an intercommunicative relation between them (karrahimaoghadam, 2005, p: 83).
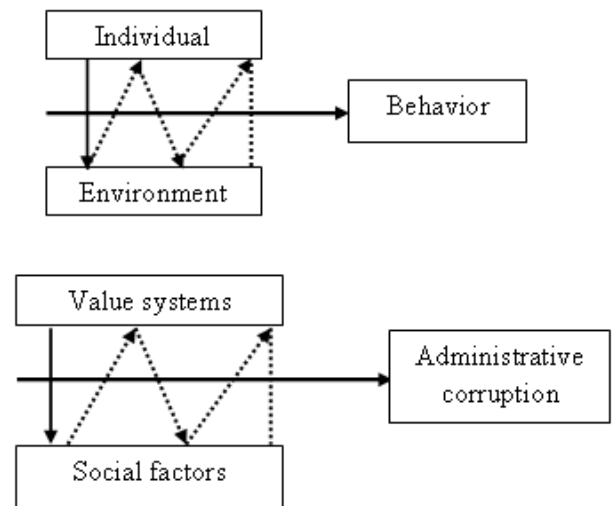
Figure 4. Intercommunication point of view

In conclusion, the intercommunication between individual and environment can cause behavior and also the wrong effects of society's values on social factors can cause corruption.

Lack of attention to morality and not emphasizing on refinement

Moral and Islamic values are the most important factors that help a society to stay away from corruption.

The best way to have a healthy society free from corruption, crime and perversion is for the people to refine themselves and be responsible. so the best investment for each country and each society is to stabilize Islamic, cultural and moral values and to consolidate consciousness, honesty, taking responsibility, good manners and intentions, righteousness, munificence and gentility in the society and fight with immoral behavior , bribery, desires and passion, the lust for power and greed. And if people in a society be able to overcome all these immoral behavior it would be the biggest success for that society and as a result there would not be any need for the police force or any need to invest huge amounts of money on health care, addiction, prisons and treatment.

According to Imams and Islamic points of view, divine values are very basic and important factors and all Imams have tried to stabilize and consolidate these factors in the society in order to free human kind from darkness and corruption and lead them toward a better society for refinement.

In a study done by Management and Planning Organization of Iran, the factors that cause official corruption are:

Lack of enough knowledge about Islamic values, lack of management skills, put individual interests in priority and ignoring public interest, not paying attention to the needs of employees, assigning important responsibilities to inefficient and inexperienced people, lack of enough knowledge and skill, ignoring rules and laws, long-term projects, unemployment and no hope for the future, not encouraging the honest, skillful and efficient forces.

According to the Investigation Organization of Iran, that has done about 1187 reports; the following factors are the main reasons for corruption:

Lack of management skills, lack of expertise, lack of responsibility, doing jobs based on one's own interests, not monitoring the activities done in offices and by employees, not observing the circulations of finance , lack of balance between rules in organizations and the existing conditions in the society and lack of balance between expertise and the job done by people.

Conclusion

From Islamic point of view we can summarize the causes of corruption as the following:

1. Corruption has always been a threat to humans and one thing that can prevent human from turning to corruption is "avoiding dubiety and skepticism".

2. One of the most important reasons for the corruption to happen is being attracted to the physical and financial matters so taking care of public property(Beitol mal) by people who are in charge and managers is considered very important.

3. The threat for managers and governors of an Islamic society is not only financial misuse of the power they have but also trying to find a legal excuse for their faults and illegal actions.

4. Government managers must try to make their decisions based on public benefit not their own interests so this way people in an Islamic society will try to be sensitive to the rights of those who make their every effort to do their job honestly and efficiently.

5. Choosing the right managers for the right job can build trust. people need to be certain that the best would be chosen. In employing managers it is important to avoid any selfishness and any effort to choose someone based a relation.

6. In an Islamic society high executives should be really careful about the way they live and the way they earn or increase their property in order to avoid any doubts.

7. punishing wrong doers and the ones who commit illegal actions should be taken into consideration very seriously

8. As it is clear corruption is a complicated matter and different factors are involved in causing corruption. Individual and group motivations, taking rules easy, complicated rules and laws, dictatorship views, ignoring official rules, dubiety and lack of clarity in budget, lack of any observation on budget, lack of clarity in jobs and responsibilities that has been assigned, manipulating financial and official documents, lack of correct monitoring by organizations that are responsible, lack of willingness and power to fight with corruption, the increase in poverty, greed, thinking of being right and doing the right thing while it is not right and ignoring those who are efficient are the most important factors in causing corruption as a result there is defalcation in every organization from small to large and building distrust among people. Official corruption is similar to an infectious disease in body that would ruin the whole if it would not be prevented.

9. Roots of corruption need to be investigated in human resources of an organization. By focusing on this resource and finding the appropriate ways we can prevent corruption.

10. Organizational culture is one factor that can help to prevent corruption. This culture with its different aspects, individual, group and official, along with strengthening moral values and self purification plays an important role in controlling employee's behavior and preventing corruption. Respecting employees, stabilization of social system, creating inner commitment, creating motivation, presenting a good role model, are different aspects of official culture that must taken into consideration. In an Islamic society instead of running a punishment-based strategy after the commitment of crime, we need a plan that helps with the prevention of corruption by affecting the public culture and its aspects. It has always been emphasized that prevention is better than treatment. As a result, creating official culture is a great factor for corruption prevention.

11. The right implementation of law and justice in punishing wrongdoers can help to decrease corruption. The law does not apply only when a crime is being committed it should also be applied where there is inefficiency in management and lack of ability in making the right decisions.

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