International Journal on Economics, Finance and Sustainable Development (IJEFSD)

e-ISSN: 2620 – 6269
p-ISSN: 2615 - 4021

Volume: 7 Issue: 4 | December 2024

https://journals.researchparks.org/index.php/IJEFSD

Article

Corruption as a Factor of Political Instability: The Path to Sustainable Development Through Civil Society

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Abstract: Corruption remains a pervasive issue with significant societal impacts, yet its underlying causes and effective solutions are not fully understood. This study explores the root causes of corruption, drawing on a comparative analysis of international experiences to identify common patterns and challenges. Addressing a knowledge gap in understanding the interplay between corruption and societal development, the research employs a multidisciplinary approach, including qualitative analysis of corruption-related issues. The findings highlight critical factors driving corruption and propose actionable recommendations to mitigate its effects. The study provides insights for policymakers and stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of targeted strategies to reduce corruption and promote societal integrity.

Keywords: Corruption, Anti-corruption measures, Corruption mechanism, Civil society, Independent mass media, Preventive methods

1. Introduction

Corruption is a focal point of research, and its impact on the normal functioning of politics, the economy, and the socio-cultural sphere continues to raise serious concerns not only in Uzbekistan but also in several other countries. Despite efforts and reforms undertaken to combat it, corruption remains an integral part of everyday life. This concern stems not only from the scale of corruption but also from its deep consequences. Corruption in society acts as a catalyst for public dissatisfaction, a destroyer of political institutions, and a brake on economic growth.

As M.M. Alimova states in her academic article:

"Corruption poses a real threat to society, as it permeates all of society and represents a system where the anti-social misuse of official powers is evident."

Speaking of its impact, corruption influences political processes by undermining citizens' trust in the government and institutions. As a result, tendencies toward political instability and social conflicts are amplified. Economically, it distorts markets, disrupts competition, and hinders economic growth.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a multidisciplinary approach to investigate the root causes and impacts of corruption, as well as to propose actionable anti-corruption strategies.

Materials

The research draws on primary and secondary data sources, including:

Citation: Abduganiev Jamshid Alievich. Corruption as a Factor of Political Instability: The Path to Sustainable Development Through Civil Society. International Journal on Economics, Finance and Sustainable Development (IJEFSD) 2024, 7(4), 736-741.

Received: 10th Sept 2024
Revised: 13th Oct 2024
Accepted: 22th Nov 2024
Published: 31th Dec 2024

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Academic Articles and Reports: Key insights from scholarly works, such as M.M. Alimova's analysis on corruption as a systemic issue and E.E. Tonkov's perspectives on the societal impacts of corruption, were incorporated. Official Statistics: Data provided by the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, particularly corruption-related crime statistics from 2021, served as a critical reference point. Case Studies: Comparative analyses of international experiences in combating corruption, with a focus on countries exhibiting varying levels of corruption and governance practices.

Methods

Qualitative Analysis: The study utilized qualitative methods to analyze corruption mechanisms and societal impacts. Themes such as political instability, economic distortion, and socio-cultural degradation were explored through content analysis of case studies and expert opinions. Comparative Analysis: A comparative approach was adopted to identify patterns and differences in corruption mechanisms across various geopolitical contexts. This analysis highlighted effective measures and policy shortcomings in addressing corruption.

Statistical Review: Crime statistics and financial damage reports from Uzbekistan were examined to contextualize the scale and impact of corruption within the region. Thematic Synthesis: Insights from literature and case studies were synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of corruption's influence and the role of civil society, independent media, and preventive methods in combating it.

Analytical Framework

The research framework was guided by the interplay between governance structures, socio-economic conditions, and anti-corruption mechanisms. Factors such as poverty, lack of transparency, and institutional weaknesses were analyzed as potential enablers of corruption. This methodological approach enables a holistic understanding of corruption while offering practical recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to implement targeted, evidence-based solutions.

3. Results

In the socio-cultural sphere, corruption establishes immoral value systems, which may create a precedent for negative behavior within society. Furthermore, I fully agree with the opinion of Professor E.E. Tonkov, Doctor of Law, regarding the necessity of combating corruption: "The metastases of corruption penetrate the economy of the state intensively. In the absence of transparency, accountability, and control within the country, corruption, as a cumulative product of the monopolization of state power, inevitably leads to authoritarianism and oligarchy. The corruption mechanism poses a real threat to the rights and freedoms of individuals in society by obstructing constitutional rights through lobbying, nepotism, and sometimes direct violence."

Referring to statistics, according to the Director of the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, A. Burkhanov, in 2021, 184 corruption-related crimes were committed in Tashkent alone, causing financial damage to the state and society amounting to 82 billion 638 million soums. These statistics account only for the capital and do not include other regions. I believe that corruption thrives in an environment where citizens feel powerless against the system or do not see effective mechanisms to fight it. Examples of such situations can be found in many countries where the population faces high levels of poverty, lack of access to education and healthcare, and insufficient trust in law enforcement agencies and government institutions. In such conditions, people may feel that their voices will not be heard and that fighting corruption is a futile effort.

This atmosphere of helplessness can create fertile ground for the growth of corruption, as corrupt officials and businesspersons may perceive this as a lack of obstacles to their actions. However, it is important to note that active civic participation and the formation of civil society can significantly reduce corruption. When people unite their efforts, they can create pressure on the authorities, demand justice, and support anti-corruption measures. Civil society and independent mass media can serve as essential tools for changing this dynamic and increasing accountability.

As the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, noted: "Every conscientious citizen who values the future of our country and respects its prestige must remember this threat. It is necessary to strive for sustainable conditions for the free development of knowledge, willpower, diligence, and creative potential. To ensure that our children and loved ones can participate in a developing democratic society, we must demand that every citizen who seeks to benefit from a civilized society avoids crime and corruption in a timely manner to prevent potential negative consequences of these phenomena."

Many international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), actively support anti-corruption efforts. There are various international conventions and agreements aimed at preventing corruption, such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Many countries are also developing national strategies and programs to combat corruption, implementing anti-corruption measures, and strengthening oversight and control systems. However, the problem of corruption remains complex and requires joint efforts at both the global and national levels.

Effective anti-corruption measures include not only legal and legislative actions but also cultural changes, raising public awareness, and active citizen participation in monitoring government activities. I agree with the opinion of P.A. Istomin regarding the legal framework, specifically: "A few years ago, it was fair to say that an important legal factor influencing corrupt behavior was the absence of a modern legal framework to combat corruption." In recent years, it can be said that the Republic lacked a comprehensive legal framework regulating corruption-related offenses. Most fundamental domestic laws were adopted recently, and some legal loopholes were addressed. The adoption of key documents on combating corruption includes:

1. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption";
2. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption" (New York, October 31, 2003);
3. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Normative Legal Acts";
4. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Connection with the Improvement of the Anti-Corruption System in the Republic of Uzbekistan";
5. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Public Procurement";
6. Presidential Decree No. PP-4951, dated January 14, 2021, "On Measures to Implement an Effective Mechanism for Determining the State of Rule of Law in the Republic of Uzbekistan";
7. Presidential Decree No. PP-81, dated January 12, 2022, "On Measures to Implement a System for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Efforts";
8. Presidential Decree No. PP-34, dated December 7, 2021, "On Additional Measures for Further Improvement of the Activities of the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan";
9. Presidential Decree No. PP-5177, dated July 6, 2021, "On Additional Measures for Effective Organization of Anti-Corruption Activities";

10. Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 373, dated June 15, 2021, "On Measures to Further Improve the Rating System for the Development of the Digital Economy and E-Government";
11. Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 829, dated December 31, 2020, "On Approval of the Regulation on Rewarding Persons Who Report Corruption Offenses or Otherwise Assist in Combating Corruption";
12. Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 37, dated January 26, 2021, "On Measures to Further Improve the Organization of Procurement Procedures for Public Procurement Using Information and Communication Technologies";
13. Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 23, dated January 18, 2021, "On Approval of the Concept for the Development of State Youth Policy in Uzbekistan until 2025."

These and other normative legal acts indicate that a legal framework for combating corruption has already been established, although many citizens remain unaware of these measures, despite their benefits to the population.

4. Discussion

In his address to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan, the Head of State, Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, paid special attention to the preventive method of combating corruption. Specifically, he stated: "I would like to address the pressing issue of corruption. Over the past two years, about 5,000 officials have been held accountable for corruption offenses. However, we must openly admit that this is a fight against the consequences, not the causes.

Isn't it time for deputies, senators, and local Kengashes to sound the alarm, analyze specific areas, and actively work towards eradicating corruption? Just imagine how the situation would change if each deputy inspected the budget-funded construction of facilities and roads in their district every month, demanding quality work from clients and contractors. You have the authority and the means to do this. To combat corruption, special laws have been enacted, and a legal framework has been established. Now, practical work must be strengthened. All loopholes that allow artificial monopolies, closed schemes, and corruption as a whole will be eliminated."

Indeed, if the state only addresses the consequences of corruption, it is financially disadvantageous. The maintenance of prisoners also requires budgetary funds, and it is generally difficult for convicted individuals to reintegrate into society. Moreover, if imprisonment remains the last resort for punishing offenders, once they are convicted, there are no other means of enforcement aside from the death penalty.

International Experience:

In comparison with Scandinavian countries, it is worth highlighting the experience of Finland. Finland's approach is centered on its citizens. Finnish citizens have an active civic stance and are confident that the majority's opinion will be heard and considered in decision-making processes. This creates an unfavorable environment for the existence and growth of corruption in Finland.

Finnish society is stable, and there are no significant political disagreements among its social strata. Differences in citizens' well-being are minimal, and extreme poverty is non-existent. Most Finns belong to the middle class, which allows them to live in security and plan for their own future and the future of their children.

5. Conclusion

Based on the General Provisions and the Previously Mentioned Facts:

For more effective engagement of civil society in combating corruption, the following recommendations can be proposed:

1. Mobilization of the Ministry of Justice:

The Ministry of Justice should mobilize all its efforts in legal advocacy in accordance with the legislation by conducting various roundtables, seminars, training sessions, etc. This is essential because the Ministry is responsible for legal advocacy and for communicating the essence and significance of legislative acts to the population.

2. Involvement of Kengash Committees:

Permanent and temporary committees of the Kengash of People's Deputies, such as the Committee on Judicial Affairs and the Fight Against Corruption, should be actively involved in anti-corruption efforts.

3. Enhancing the Role of Mass Media:

The role of mass media in combating corruption should be increased, and their activities in delivering accurate information should be continuously supported. Financial incentives should be provided for reporting such crimes, including corruption offenses, by individuals, in accordance with the legislation.

In the latter case, it is recommended to amend the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 829, dated December 31, 2020, "On the Procedure for Rewarding Persons Who Report Corruption Offenses or Otherwise Assist in Combating Corruption" to include a legislative provision for rewarding the mass media.

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