Paper #1
A Comparative Analysis of
Ethical Issues
In
India and Nigeria

by,
Brandon Garber, BS
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Robert Dibie, PhD.

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School of Public Environment and Affairs
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Introduction

This student was given two scholarly journal articles to review and to make a comparative analysis. These two articles were used to analyze two different counties and their problems involving ethics within the public sector. Black’s Law Dictionary (1991), states that ethics are, “Of or relating to a moral action, conduct, motive or character... Professionally right or befitting; conforming to professional standards of conduct” (p. 384).

The first article is entitled, Code of conduct and Ethics for Civil Servants in India and the United Kingdom, and was written by B. Ratan Reddy. This article appeared in The Indian Journal of Public Administration during January-March 1999 volume. In this article Reddy explores, “The causes of [why] civil servants’ [are] drifting away from rich traditional and classical values” (1999, p.17). He also examines the existing framework of ensuring proper conduct of civil servants in India. This framework includes Constitutional provisions, anti-corrupting laws, conduct rules, and institutional arrangements (Reddy, 1999). He further compares the Indian arrangement to what is being in used in the United Kingdom and then he gives his suggestions of which arrangements, should be implemented in India to correct these issues (Reddy, 1999).

The second article is entitled, Ethical Leadership, Social Responsibility and Corruption in Nigeria and was written by Dr. Robert
Dibie. This article appeared in the International Review of Politics and Development during the January 2007 volume. In this article Dibie explores the “dynamics of corruption, unethical behavior and mismanagement in the public sector of Nigeria” (2007, p.1). He also holds that the state control of the economy creates opportunities that include corruption, lack of accountability, greed and ignorance by public leaders and business officials (Dibie, 2007).

Dibie further holds, “That corruption in Nigeria cannot be eradicated by increasing the number of anticorruption agencies but through pragmatic government efforts to look towards implementing a more encompassing reform of its political, administrative and economic operations as well as rule of law” (2007, p. 1). Lastly, Dibie investigates what Nigeria needs to do in the twenty-first century to drive out corruption, achieve sustainable development and to promote entrepreneurship and innovation (Dibie, 2007).

Problems

India

India is located in Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan (CIA World Fact Book: India, 2008). India has a Federal Republic style of government. This means that it is a state in which, “The powers of the central government are restricted and in which the component parts (states, colonies, or
provinces) retain a degree of self-government; ultimate sovereign power rests with the voters who chose their governmental representatives (CIA World Fact Book: Notes and Definitions, 2008).

In order to understand the political and other complex factors within India, a brief history was attained from the CIA World Fact Book. It states that:

Aryan tribes from the northwest infiltrated onto the Indian subcontinent about 1500 B.C.; their merger with the earlier Dravidian inhabitants created the classical Indian culture. The Maurya Empire of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. - which reached its zenith under Ashoka - united much of South Asia. The Golden Age ushered in by the Gupta dynasty (4th to 6th centuries A.D.) saw a flowering of Indian science, art, and culture. Arab incursions starting in the 8th century and Turkic in the 12th were followed by those of European traders, beginning in the late 15th century. By the 19th century, Britain had assumed political control of virtually all Indian lands. Indian armed forces in the British army played a vital role in both World Wars. Nonviolent resistance to British colonialism led by Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru brought independence in 1947. The subcontinent was divided into the secular state of India and the smaller Muslim state of Pakistan. A third war between the two countries in 1971 resulted in East Pakistan becoming the separate
nation of Bangladesh. India’s nuclear weapons testing in 1998 caused Pakistan to conduct its own tests that same year. The dispute between the countries over the state of Kashmir is ongoing, but discussions and confidence-building measures have led to decreased tensions since 2002. Despite impressive gains in economic investment and output, India faces pressing problems such as significant overpopulation, environmental degradation, extensive poverty, and ethnic and religious strife (2008, paragraph 1).

Reddy holds that the major cause of the conflict of values within the public service sector in India arises out of the, “dichotomy between the mores of a traditional society and those of modern organization” (1999, p.18). Bureaucracy by its very nature is arranged in a way that people are recruited on merit, and promotions are given on the basis of set criteria; therefore, it is a system that is meant to be, “dispassionate, objective, impersonal and impartial” (Reddy, 1999, P. 18).

India however, has a traditional society where forces like caste, clan, familial relationship and personal preferences play a decisive part of life (Reddy, 1999). The conflict originates from the Indian geopolitical system tries to implement a Weverian model of administration; thus creating “formative influences [that] exert such pressures on the individual” (Reddy, 1999).
Reddy holds that in the light of all of the formal training and education gained, the individual is not able to either comprehend or remove this conflict in his mind (1999). Societal and familial expectations are often so great that many public servants cave to these pressures. Thus, instead of carrying out his public functions in accordance with the rules, procedures and values of the government, he chooses to depart from them and obliges his clan or family; he is not able to act impartially (Reddy, 1999). Another interesting fact that Reddy points out is that the individual is not able to recognize this rift within himself (1999). This deviation in behavioral, “makes civil service stray from its noble objectives of service to the county and its people and, therefore becomes ineffective” (Reddy, 1999 p. 19).

Reddy has summed up this internal conflict faced by many public administrators in Indian by stating,

The Indian society since 1947 has gone in for purposeful social information. Government spending has increased manifold and new institutions have been created. The dynamics of social growth lies primarily in the transitions from an agrarian society to an industrial one... When a society changes so suddenly after years of subjugation, the break with the past comes as a big jolt and is no less painful... This, in turn has created a crisis of character and confidence. Increased material prosperity without a core of strong
values can have the effect of individual member of society acting in a way pernicious to the larger good of society (1999, p. 19).

Nigeria

Nigeria is located in Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon (CIA World Fact Book: Nigeria, 2008). Nigeria also has a Federal Republic system of government. In order to understand the political and other complex factors in Nigeria, a brief history was attained from the CIA World Fact Book. It states that:

British influence and control over what would become Nigeria grew through the 19th century. A series of constitutions after World War II granted Nigeria greater autonomy; independence came in 1960. Following nearly 16 years of military rule, a new constitution was adopted in 1999, and a peaceful transition to civilian government was completed. The government continues to face the daunting task of reforming a petroleum-based economy, whose revenues have been squandered through corruption and mismanagement, and institutionalizing democracy. In addition, Nigeria continues to experience longstanding ethnic and religious tensions. Although both the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections were marred by significant irregularities and violence, Nigeria is currently experiencing its longest period of civilian rule since independence. The general elections of April, 2007, marked the
Dibie (2007) holds that a, “major side effect of globalization has been the gradual shift in cultural values around the world” (p. 9). In Nigeria there has been a true merger of culture, and a new highbred culture has been created based on traditional ethical values and newly adopted western moral values (Dibie, 2007). However, Dibie states that it has become a, “common tradition in Nigeria for public leaders to behave as thought the public services is a ‘no man business sector.’” Thus bribery has become a means of concealing ineffectiveness and inefficiency” (2007, p. 9).

Dibie (2007) cites several examples of this corruption that involve bribery and other means of concealing ineffectiveness and inefficiency. This includes:

- Police, custom and excise officers are often seen at public “road blocks” around the country collecting bribes.
- When people go to the police station in Nigeria to report a crime, it has become normal practice in some stations for the police to request that the complainant pay a bribe to “work their case.”
- Nigerian Telecommunications (NITEL) often times “toss the telephone lines” of subscribers just to extort money from citizens (i.e. so the subscriber would have to pay to reconnect their telephone lines).
- There is a problem of mail pilfering within the Nigeria Post Office (NIPOST). For example Dibie holds, “To send money or any precious items through the post officer is like giving an armed robber your house keys” (2007, p.11).
- Lastly there are countless examples of corruption within the Nigerian military.
In order to combat these corruptions the Nigerian government has established several anti-corruption agencies. These agencies include: the Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligent Unit (BMPIU), Nigeria Financial Intelligent Unit (FIU), Nigerian Police Act, Public Complain Commission (PCC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal (Dibie, 2007). However, Dibie (2007) holds that, “despite the establishment of these anti-corruption agencies, there have been no meaningful efforts to reduce the unethical practice of corruption in Nigeria” (p. 19).

**Critical Analysis**

**India**

Reddy (1999) holds that in the context dynamic social growth, the question is, “How the coherence of the civil service in an ethical and behavioral sense can be maintained?” (p. 19). Reddy’s concern is to ensure that civil servants use their executive power in an objective manner in public interest as different from private motives (1999).

It could be said that a good many of the existing rules govern a public servant’s behavior in the discharge of his functions. However, “The main emphasis of such rule is on checking abuse of authority for deriving personal benefits by individual public servants” (Reddy, 1999, p. 19). Reddy (1999) further holds that the other aspect of these rules
relate to the political neutrality of the civil service, organizational
discipline, and even matters touching social morality. Therefore, a public
servant is expected to be some kind of behavioral role-model (Reddy,
1999).

It could then be concluded that the present set of rules that govern
the conduct of public servants in India are in line with the aspects
discussed above. In addition, there are laws enacted for the purpose of
controlling corruption and other related offenses committed by public
curbing corruption is in itself indicative of both the extent of the problem
of corruption and the resolve of the government to combat it” (p. 19).

Over the last fort decades the Indian Government has attempted to
curb the problem of corruption through several series of commissions
and acts. These include:

- The creation of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the
  Vigilance Commission in 1962 to study the problems of corruption
  and recommend remedial measures (Reddy, 1999).

- The enactment of the Preventions of Corruption Act (PC Act) in
  1988 to fight corruption which was threatening to be all pervasive.
  The important sections under the PC Act are Sections 7, 8, 9, 11
  and 13. These sections deal with public servants taking illegal
  gratification for official acts or taking gratification to influence
  public savants as well as any criminal misconduct by a public
  servant (Reddy, 1999).

- Several Constitutional Provisions. The relevant section is Article
  17, Part III – Fundamental Rights. “The constitution declares that
  ‘untouchability’ is abolished and forbids its practice in any form;
  the proactive of untouchability has also been made and offence
under the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955” (Reddy, 1999, p. 23).

- The government under its statutory powers to make administrative rules as developed **Conduct Rules**; these rules govern public behavior of a civil servant. Reddy (1999) sums up these rules:
  - A public servant should be a role model of social and familial behavior for society.
  - He shall maintain absolute integrity.
  - A public servant should be politically neutral.

- **Dowry Prohibition Act** of 1961 prohibits acceptance or giving or demanding dowry. However, Reddy (1999) holds that many young public servants still take huge dowries at the time of their wedding but, disguises these as gifts given by the father of the bride to his daughter.

- **Conduct Rules on Acquisition of Property** states that a public servant has to inform his organization about all purchases and acquisition of movable and immovable property (Reddy, 1999). Furthermore, senior public servants are required to submit an annual property return giving particulars of the immovable property inherited by him or owned by him in his own name or in the name of any other member of the family (Reddy, 1999).

**Nigeria**

According to Dibie (2007) corruption distorts economic incentives, and discourages the achievement of sustainable development; however, the Nigeria’s public leaders are not the only people to blame. People who seek favor from public leaders and are willing to pay bribes to obtain unfair advantages and/or to become rich, are enablers (Dibie, 2007). As a matter of fact, “if those on the supply side are unwilling to pay bribes, corruption in the public sector would be limited to nepotism, illegal levies, and the illegal appropriations of public resources” (Dibie, 2007, p. 13).
According to Mbaku (1992) “high inflation and the relatively low salary paid to civil servants in Nigeria has also contributed to the significant increase in corruption” (cited in Dibie, 2007). Because of this a considerable amount of income for several public administrators are derived from engaging in corrupt activities (Banjo, 2004) (cited in Dibie, 2007). In addition to low salary and high inflation, another problem is the late payment of salaries. Dibie (2007) believes that,

There were times when the salary of some government employees was not paid for three of more months. When salaries are not paid, public servants will be made to face delicate financial constraints that will make it difficult for them to resist bribery.

The history of Nigeria show that regardless of the system of government, military or democratic, government control of the economy will inevitably lead to corruption (p.12).

In order to combat these corruptions the Nigerian government has established several anti-corruption agencies. These agencies include: the Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligent Unit (BMPIU), Nigeria Financial Intelligent Unit (FIU), Nigerian Police Act, Public Complain Commission (PCC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal (Dibie, 2007). However, Dibie (2007) holds that, “despite the establishment of these anti-corruption
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agencies, there have been no meaningful efforts to reduce the unethical practice of corruption in Nigeria” (p. 19).

**Recommendations**

**India**

This student agrees with Reddy’s (1999) statement, “The theoretical construct of the public service is that the people are the master and the public functionary will serve them. Unfortunately, in actual fact, the reverse is true [in India]” (p. 32). Reddy holds (1999) that in India the common person has no access to the gateway of power and public servants are seen as, “practitioners of some esoteric power rites” (p. 32). All this is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary person who is subjugated to the same level of servility that existed in time past; this has to do with the training of the superior civil services. Therefore, Reddy holds that some type of corrective action is required in order to make officers realize that public service is not only a profession, but a mission (1999).

Additionally, Reddy believes that there has to be a greater degree of transparency within the administrative process itself (1999). If people have to participate in social development, they also have a right to know how decisions are taken. “Without information and comprehension, there cannot be active involvement. Greater transparency will enable people to respond to issues. Also, it will reinforce the values of honesty
and correct behavior on the part of government servant” (Reddy, 1999, p. 32).

There is no doubt that the Indian administration will need a strong core of dynamic values to transform its cultural values; therefore, laws can be made and rules framed to this end (Reddy, 1999). Thus, enforcement agencies can prosecute and the system can punish, and this will have an impact (Reddy, 1999). “Nonetheless, enforcement of morality through law will largely remain an external process that can at best delineate a framework for public behavior that should not be transgressed” (Reddy, 1999, p. 32).

Reddy (1999) holds that law and rules, are somewhat external and will contain certain negative tendencies; however, purposeful social opinion, will create the right environment for a public organization to function (Reddy, 1999). Reddy holds that the government has to use the media and other channels of communication to mold public’s perceptions and opinions in this positive direction. Thus, “ostracism or social sanctions would be much better when we are attempting large scale and holistic transformation” (Reddy, 1999, p. 32).

This student finds Reddy’s recommendations for more governmental transparency, transforming cultural values though the use of laws and rules and the government attempting to mold the public’s perceptions and opinions in a positive direction through the use the
media and other channels of communication to be germane. Therefore, this student concurs with his recommendations.

**Nigeria**

This student agrees with Dibie (2007) who states, “...[S]tate control of the economy and the excessive regulation of the economic activities create the opportunistic behavior that include corruption due to lack of accountability, ineffective rule of law, greed, and ignorance by public leaders and business officials in Nigeria” (p. 37). He further argues that corruption in Nigeria can not be eradicated by increasing the number of anti-corruption agencies (Dibie, 2007). This can only be completed through, “pragmatic government efforts to look towards implementing a more encompassing reform of it political, administrative and economic operations” (Dibie, 2007, p. 37). Therefore, if there is an efficient and effective rule of law in place in Nigeria, this can be achieved. Thus,

Any attempt at eradicating corruption in Nigeria must rest on a comprehensive and sustained system of public accountability that takes into account the interactive nature of the social institutions, political, economic, legal, family, religious, educational and cultural values and norms (Dibie, 2007, p. 37).

Dibie (2007) continues by holding that most public leaders, that are elected or appointed, lack the skills required to make the hard choices and ethical problems that are inherent in public policy. Dibie believes that the way to overcome this lack of skills in the area of ethical
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analysis is, “(1) To provide occasions for these officials to build and develop the necessary tools of analysis through training and education; and (2) In addition, organizational development mechanism could be implement that would be recognized as part of the territory of public service” (2007, p. 38).

Dibie (2007) further regards that the family, church, mosque, and schools play a vital role in changing the values and social norms in Nigeria. An introduction of a greater sense of national identity would help to provide accountability and transparency. Thus, citizens would need to accept that self interests need not take a back set to individual rights, justice, and fairness in public dealings (Dibie, 2007). Therefore, the most effective means of addressing corruption would be done through constitutional rule of law and disciplinary actions backed by an efficient and effective enforcement system. This would therefore ensure cooperation and compliance (Dibie, 2007).

This student finds Dibie’s recommendations, that the government should implementing more encompassing reforms its political, administrative and economic operations, and requiring public administrators to overcome their lack of skills in the area of ethical analysis to be sound recommendation. Dibie suggests that this could be accomplished by, “(1) ...[P]roviding occasions for these officials to build and develop the necessary tools of analysis through training and education; and (2) ...[O]rganizational development mechanisms could be
implemented that would be recognized as part of the territory of public service” (2007, p. 38). Further, this student finds that the introduction of a greater sense of national identity that would provide accountability and transparency to be germane as well. Therefore, this student concurs with Dibie’s recommendations.

**Conclusion**

Both India and Nigeria have a long and rich history with unique values and norms. However, when you factor in the concept of globalization within these developing counties, the groundwork is set for the breeding of corruption. Both counties are facing problems that are pragmatic in several other developing counties around the world. Reddy and Dibie had similar ideas on how to remedy or, at the very least, how to minimize the problems within both countries. This student agrees with the recommendations of these scholars.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely; therefore, as long as there are people in power that are motivated by greed and self-interest, there will always be corruption and it will not be limited to developing counties. Society as a whole needs to step up and hold their public administrators responsible for their actions. Furthermore, public administrators need to be ethical and not violate the sacred public trust that they have been bestowed upon them.
References


