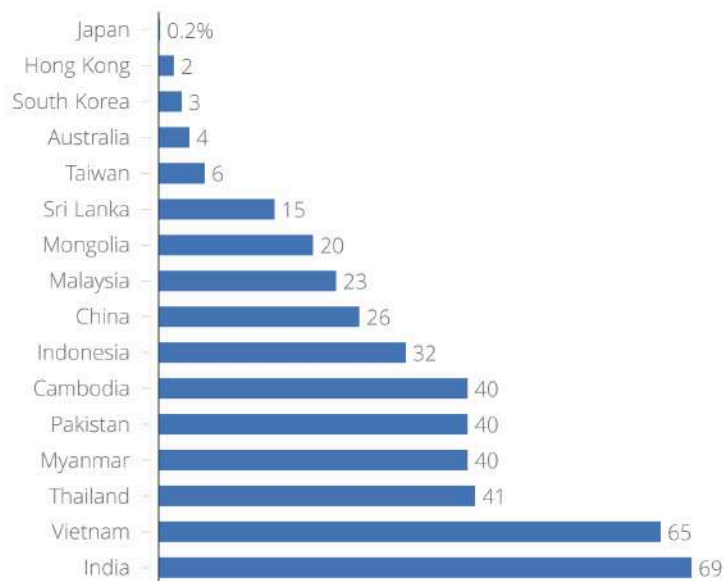


## JOHN LOCKE ESSAY COMPETITION

Corruption, defined as the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain, manifests itself in various forms within our society. Examples range from actors securing roles due to familial connections (nepotism) to massive financial frauds like Bernie Madoff's notorious Ponzi scheme, which defrauded investors of billions of dollars. Among the numerous types of corruption, political or government corruption stands out as one of the most corrosive, persisting since the days of Aristotle. The Greek philosopher, in the third century, described it as the practice of leaders prioritizing personal advantage over the pursuit of public interest. Political corruption is prevalent across nations worldwide and has persisted throughout history, from Italy to India, manifesting in forms like fraud, bribery, and embezzlement. This paper aims to explore the prevalent corruption and its underlying causes in India and its neighboring country, Pakistan.

India, a country surrounded by water on three sides, is home to the world's highest mountain range and a population of over 1.4 billion people. While it is known for its flavorful spices, it is also infamous for its deeply entrenched corruption. It is an open secret that political corruption in India is rampant, with a staggering 89% of Indians perceiving it as a significant problem. In fact, India exhibits the highest rates of bribery and the use of personal connections to access public services, such as healthcare and education, in Asia, as highlighted in a survey conducted by Transparency International, a global civil society organization. Consequently, it becomes crucial to explore the root causes behind this pervasive corruption.

Bribery Rates Across the Asia-Pacific Region



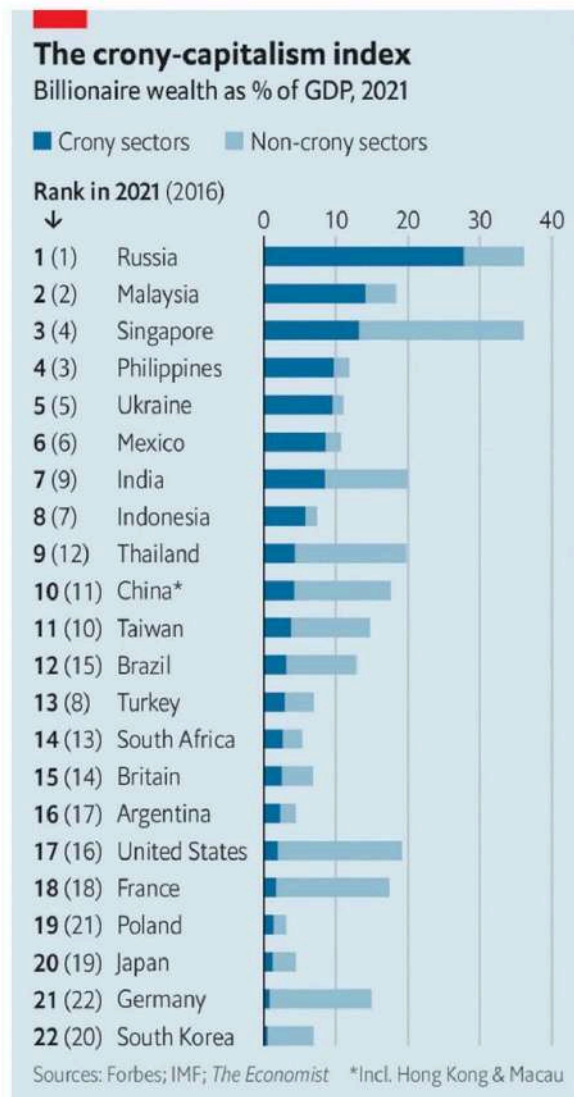
Made by BRINK Asia

Data: Transparency International

- “Is Corruption Asia’s Biggest Socioeconomic Challenge?” *BRINK – Conversations and Insights on Global Business*, 10 May 2017,  
[www.brinknews.com/is-corruption-asias-biggest-socioeconomic-challenge](http://www.brinknews.com/is-corruption-asias-biggest-socioeconomic-challenge).

There are a wide array of causes for political corruption in India starting with the unlawful practices used in election time. India has a parliamentary system as defined by its constitution, with power distributed between the central government states. Many different types of elections run through the year from Lok Sabha elections to the Vidhan Sabha. During these elections, political corruption can be seen at its peak and the cause behind this corruption is the huge election spending which takes place during these times. This leads to political corruption in many ways. A report by Bloomberg carried in a couple of newspapers said that New Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies estimated that the previous Lok Sabha elections will record spending of about \$7 billion by political parties. However, none of the income statements filed by the major political parties suggest that they have that kind of money. From here the integral question is raised, where is this money coming from? Election funding is not transparent and therefore, the usage of black money to fund candidates spikes up. Candidates and political parties have the objective of winning candidacy and therefore black money is used, greatly exceeding statutory spending limits. Black money is illegal in India and the use of it at the very start of a political party's journey foreshadows the use of other corruption methods used during a party/ person's reign. Another major problem that arises during electoral politics is the nexus formed between politicians and corporations. This is characterized as crony capitalism which is defined as close, mutually advantageous relationships between business leaders and government officials. In the Crony Capitalism Index 2021 published by The Economist, India was

ranked at 7th position where crony sector wealth accounted for 8% of Gross Domestic Product



The Economist

(GDP) of the country.

During election time many large corporations reach out to politicians to fund their high election costs. This payment does not go UNREPAID as this creates the need for favorS owed by politicians to these corporations. Therefore, businesses use their political connections to gain an unfair advantage causing them to usually dominate industries and form monopolies by driving out smaller firms. This proves detrimental to the Indian economy.

Another cause of political corruption IS THE criminalization of politics. THIS refers to a growing trend in Indian politics where individuals with criminal records or charges become actively involved in politics and hold positions as politicians and elected representatives. The share of MPs with criminal and serious criminal cases increased to 43% and 29%, according to an analysis of 539 winners in the 2019 PARLIAMENTARY elections. Most of these politicians with

criminal records use their political power to aid their crimes and benefit their other illegal endeavors. The connection that one makes to this is simple when the rule-breakers become rule makers, the casualty is the rule of law.

While the judicial system in India is well respected, a major challenge is the 4.6 crore pending cases in courts across different levels of judiciary as of May 2022. Weak institutional frameworks such as slow judicial processes and limited resources for proper investigation all lead in one way or the other towards political corruption.

India shares its border with seven countries namely Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka. India and Pakistan have a well known conflicted relationship but still share many similarities. Ironically, the only indicator in which Pakistan beats India is in that of political corruption. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is a widely used measure of perceived corruption in countries around the world. In the 2020 CPI, Pakistan ranked 124 out of 180 countries, with a score of 31 out of 100, indicating a high level of perceived corruption. The causes of political corruption in Pakistan vary from lack of transparency and accountability to patronage and clientelism.



*India Pakistan Bangladesh Map.*

[www.mapsofindia.com/neighbouring-countries-maps/india-pakistan-bangladesh-map.html](http://www.mapsofindia.com/neighbouring-countries-maps/india-pakistan-bangladesh-map.html).

Unlike India, Pakistan's government faces challenges from a strong military which dictates terms to the state and impedes democratic accountability and proper governance.. Weak

governance institutions include ineffective judiciary, lack of accountability mechanisms and inadequate checks and balances. Inadequate judicial capacity, including delays in the legal process, lack of resources, and corruption within the judiciary itself, hinders the timely and fair adjudication of corruption cases. Secondly, lack of accountability measures, further exacerbate political corruption. Over the past few years Pakistan has invested in starting anti-corruption agencies, but the efficacy and execution of these agencies/measures are sub-par leading to little or no change to the major amount of political corruption in the country. Additionally, networks of patronage and political influence may weaken checks and balances. People who lack the qualifications or independence to serve as effective checks on corruption may be appointed as a result of nepotism and cronyism.

Another impactful cause of political corruption in Pakistan is undoubtedly the strong patronage and clientelism politicians hold. In Pakistan, it is not uncommon for politicians to distribute benefits, resources and favors to their loyal supporters in exchange for political support. The pressure to do this leads to forms of political corruption. The main one in a situation like this would be for politicians to use public resources for personal gain or to maintain their patronage links. This is the embodiment of political corruption as it is generally defined as the misuse of public authority. Secondly, members of a politician's client base are also usually held at a level higher than the law where they are quite repeatedly excused by the politician in power from legal consequences. Pakistan is known for its frequent changes in government and this instability compromises long-term policy implementation and planning. This opens windows for corruption as officials lack the fear of consequences as they are aware that in the long run they won't be punished for exploiting their position for political gain.

Lastly, the lack of transparency in the Pakistani system is a gateway for political corruption. This failure to be transparent runs deep in many practices in Pakistan such as budgetary allocations, procurement, and decision-making to name a few. These act as gaps in the system where corruption can thrive because the lack of transparency ultimately erodes accountability. Not only this, but because of these gaps it becomes increasingly easy for political corruption to thrive as it's harder to find evidence of it.

India and Pakistan are 2 countries which forged their 'Trysts with Destiny' as India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru put it, in August 1947 with independence from the British Empire and the birth of a new country, Pakistan. However, 75 years later, both countries have followed completely different trajectories, today India is the 5th largest economy in the world, Pakistan the 42th. While both countries have battled with political corruption, India has managed to ensure a culture of accountability which is largely missing in Pakistan. To elaborate on this point, the example of Pakistan's first female and second nationally elected prime minister, Benazir Bhutto works well. Benazir Bhutto, and her husband Asif Ali Zardari who was infamously known as Mr. 10% because of the charge he took 10% of the value of every government project cleared were indicted by the courts. These ranged from money laundering to the Park Lane case where allegedly they purchased 307 acres of prime property in Islamabad at

very low rates using frontmen. Pakistan has a highly centralized political structure, and concentrates power in the hands of very few. This makes it easy for corruption to flourish. A lack of checks and balances or a dominant ruling party with limited accountability mechanisms can create opportunities for corruption.

After the thorough research carried out for this essay, it is evident that the main causes of political corruption are lack of transparency, weak governance and institutional structures, nexus between politicians and bureaucrats and political structure. In relation to the question, making comparisons on the basis of different levels of corruption between India and Pakistan should be handled with caution as corruption is a complex issue. Corruption levels can vary based on different indices, surveys and perceptions. Additionally, corruption can change over time due to various factors. Overall, it is essential to avoid generalizations and consider the unique context and complexities of each country when discussing corruption levels.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Amundsen, Inge. "Political Corruption: An Introduction to the Issues." *CMI*, [www.cmi.no/publications/1040-political-corruption](http://www.cmi.no/publications/1040-political-corruption).
- 2) *Bureaucratic and Political Corruption in Pakistan*., [eprints.soas.ac.uk/9946/1/World\\_Bank\\_Evaluation\\_3.pdf](http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/9946/1/World_Bank_Evaluation_3.pdf).
- 3) "Causes of Corruption in Pakistan." *Causes Of Corruption In Pakistan - 881 Words | Internet Public Library*, [www.ipl.org/essay/Causes-Of-Corruption-In-Pakistan-P397PWH4ACF6](http://www.ipl.org/essay/Causes-Of-Corruption-In-Pakistan-P397PWH4ACF6).
- 4) *Corporate Governance- Issues and Challenges in Pakistan*, [hrmars.com/papers\\_submitted/9521/corporate-governance-issues-and-challenges-in-pakistan.pdf](http://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/9521/corporate-governance-issues-and-challenges-in-pakistan.pdf).
- 5) "Corruption - an Inherent Element of Democracy in Pakistan?" *EFSAS*, [www.efsas.org/publications/study-papers/corruption-an-inherent-element-of-democracy-in-pakistan/](http://www.efsas.org/publications/study-papers/corruption-an-inherent-element-of-democracy-in-pakistan/).
- 6) "Corruption in India." *Legal Service India - Law, Lawyers and Legal Resources*, [www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-10641-corruption-in-india.html](http://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-10641-corruption-in-india.html). Accessed 08 June 2023.
- 7) "Extent of Public Corruption in Pakistan." *Worlddata.Info*, [www.worlddata.info/asia/pakistan/corruption.php](http://www.worlddata.info/asia/pakistan/corruption.php).
- 8) Haleem, Junaid. "Challenges and the Way Forward for Political Reform in Pakistan." *Modern Diplomacy*, 6 Mar. 2023, [moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/03/07/challenges-and-the-way-forward-for-political-reform-in-pakistan/](http://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/03/07/challenges-and-the-way-forward-for-political-reform-in-pakistan/).
- 9) Hashmi, Amjad Javed. "Amjad Javed Hashmi." *Tax Pulse*, [www.taxpulse.com/poor-governance-pakistan/](http://www.taxpulse.com/poor-governance-pakistan/).
- 10) *Jstor Home*, [www.jstor.org/](http://www.jstor.org/).
- 11) "Neighbouring Countries of India, Full List." *Neighbouring Countries of India 2021, Map, Capitals, Connected States*, [www.careerpower.in/neighbouring-countries-of-india.html](http://www.careerpower.in/neighbouring-countries-of-india.html).
- 12) *Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre No. 2 October 2009 NOREF Policy Brief*, [www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2016-02/20091019\\_cru\\_artikel\\_mezzera.pdf](http://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2016-02/20091019_cru_artikel_mezzera.pdf).

- 13) "Pakistan Corruption RANK2023 Data - 2024 Forecast - 1995-2022 Historical - Chart." *Pakistan Corruption Rank - 2023 Data - 2024 Forecast - 1995-2022 Historical - Chart*, tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/corruption-rank. Accessed 20 June 2023.
- 14) *Pakistan's Institutions - Wilson Center*, [www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/2018-06-pakistansinstitutions.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/2018-06-pakistansinstitutions.pdf). Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 15) *Report on Present Situation, Problems and Solutions in the ... - Cairn.Info*, www.cairn.info/revue-internationale-de-droit-penal-2003-1-page-515.htm. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 16) "Corruption in India – Causes, Effects of Corruption in India and Types – IAS Gateway." *Corruption in India – Causes, Effects of Corruption in India and Types – IAS Gateway*, iasgateway.com/corruption-in-india-causes-effects-of-corruption-in-india-and-types. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 17) "Corruption in India – Causes, Effects of Corruption in India and Types Issues and Analysis @ Abhipedia Powered by ABHIMANU IAS." *Corruption in India – Causes, Effects of Corruption in India and Types Issues and Analysis @ Abhipedia Powered by ABHIMANU IAS*, 1 Jan. 1960, abhipedia.abhimanu.com/Article/IAS/MTQ1OTY5/Corruption-In-India---Causes--Effects-Of-Corruption-In-India-And-Types-Social-Issues-IAS. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 18) "Corruption in India." *Times of India Blog*, 14 Jan. 2022, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/corruption-of-india/corruption-in-india-40567. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 19) "Elections and Corruption: Politics and Public Procurement in India." *Elections and Corruption: Politics and Public Procurement in India | VoxDev*, 12 Aug. 2017, voxdev.org/topic/institutions-political-economy/elections-and-corruption-politics-and-public-procurement-india. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 20) "Elections Have Become the Biggest Source of Corruption: SY Qureshi." *NDTV.com*, 14 Nov. 2011, [www.ndtv.com/india-news/elections-have-become-the-biggest-source-of-corruption-sy-qureshi-468841](http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/elections-have-become-the-biggest-source-of-corruption-sy-qureshi-468841). Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 21) "Election Update | Elections in India | General Elections Updates." *Election Update | Elections in India | General Elections Updates*, [www.bankbazaar.com/voter-id/election-updates-in-india.html](http://www.bankbazaar.com/voter-id/election-updates-in-india.html). Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 22) "An Analytical Study on Political Corruption in India in the Last 10 Years - iPleaders." *iPleaders*, 14 July 2021, blog.ipleaders.in/analytical-study-political-corruption-india-last-10-years. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 23) Shankaran, Sanjiv. "India's Huge Election Spending Is a Reason for Political Corruption." *Times of India Blog*, 12 Mar. 2019, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/cash-flow/indias-huge-election-spending-is-a-reason-for-political-corruption. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 24) Rajgopal Singh, D. K. Singh. "What Indian Voters Buy With 'Bribes'; Just Before Elections: Booze, Good Food and Clothes." *ThePrint*, 11 May 2018, theprint.in/politics/what-indian-voters-buy-with-bribes-just-before-elections-booze-good-food-clothes/57427. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- 25) "Cash for Votes — Tamil Nadu's Best Kept Open Secret." *Cash for Votes — Tamil Nadu's Best Kept Open Secret - the Hindu*, 27 Apr. 2019, [www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/cash-for-votes-tns-best-kept-open-secret/article61557683.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/cash-for-votes-tns-best-kept-open-secret/article61557683.ece). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 26) Rampal, Nikhil. "India #10 on 'crony Capitalism' Index & How 'The Economist' Ranked 43 Biggest Economies." *ThePrint*, 11 May 2023,

theprint.in/economy/india-10-on-crony-capitalism-index-how-the-economist-ranked-43-biggest-economies/1563224. Accessed 15 June 2023.

- 27) "Crony Capitalism." *Drishti IAS*, 11 Feb. 2023, [www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/crony-capitalism](http://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/crony-capitalism). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 28) barman, mayank. "Here Are 6 Major Causes of Corruption in India." *Legodesk*, 11 May 2019, [legodesk.com/legopedia/causes-of-corruption-in-india](http://legodesk.com/legopedia/causes-of-corruption-in-india). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 29) Ravikiran. "Corruption in India: Status, Causes and Impacts | UPSC Notes - IAS EXPRESS." *IAS EXPRESS*, 23 Nov. 2022, [www.iasexpress.net/corruption-india](http://www.iasexpress.net/corruption-india). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 30) "An Analysis: Criminalization of Politics in India." *An Analysis: Criminalization of Politics in India*, [legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-10366-an-analysis-criminalization-of-politics-in-india.html](http://legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-10366-an-analysis-criminalization-of-politics-in-india.html). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 31) "All You Need to Know About Criminalization of Politics - iPleaders." *iPleaders*, 10 Apr. 2022, [blog.ipleaders.in/all-you-need-to-know-about-criminalization-of-politics](http://blog.ipleaders.in/all-you-need-to-know-about-criminalization-of-politics). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 32) "Nearly 50 per Cent MPs in New Lok Sabha Have Criminal Records." *India Today*, 25 May 2019, [www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/50-per-cent-mps-new-lok-sabha-criminal-records-1534465-2019-05-25](http://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/50-per-cent-mps-new-lok-sabha-criminal-records-1534465-2019-05-25). Accessed 15 June 2023.
- 33) "43% Newly-elected Lok Sabha MPs Have Criminal Record: ADR." *43% Newly-elected Lok Sabha MPs Have Criminal Record: ADR - the Hindu*, 26 May 2019, [www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha-2019/43-newly-elected-lok-sabha-mps-have-criminal-record-adr/article27253649.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha-2019/43-newly-elected-lok-sabha-mps-have-criminal-record-adr/article27253649.ece). Accessed 13 June 2023.
- 34) "MPs With Criminal Cases Increased in Last Decade: Report." *Hindustan Times*, 10 Aug. 2021, [www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mps-with-criminal-cases-increased-in-last-decade-report-101628621064962.html](http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mps-with-criminal-cases-increased-in-last-decade-report-101628621064962.html). Accessed 13 June 2023.
- 35) "Topic: Indian Justice System." *Statista*, [www.statista.com/topics/7601/indian-justice-system](http://www.statista.com/topics/7601/indian-justice-system). Accessed 13 June 2023.
- 36) "Issues With the Indian Judicial System - iPleaders." *iPleaders*, 5 July 2016, [blog.ipleaders.in/issues-indian-judicial-system](http://blog.ipleaders.in/issues-indian-judicial-system). Accessed 13 June 2023.
- 37) Livemint. "Average Salary in India Below ₹50,000! List of Countries With Highest Salaries." *Mint*, 1 May 2023, [www.livemint.com/news/india/international-labours-workers-day-average-salary-in-india-countries-with-highest-salaries-in-the-world-11682919492056.html](http://www.livemint.com/news/india/international-labours-workers-day-average-salary-in-india-countries-with-highest-salaries-in-the-world-11682919492056.html). Accessed 13 June 2023.
- 38) Pointer, 10. "Corruption in India: An Analysis." *Corruption in India: An Analysis*, [www.10pointer.com](http://www.10pointer.com). Accessed 13 June 2023