



Official figures from the United Nations point out that every year, \$1 trillion is paid in bribes and in developing countries, as per the UNDP, funds lost to corruption are estimated at 10 times the amount of official development assistance. If this is the case, then it is alarming for Mauritius, which has a score of 51 out of 100 on the Corruption Perceptions Index. For a country having the aim to be among the high income level, corruption can be a major barrier. How far corruption affecting our economy is a major issue?

CORRUPTION

Barriers to growth and development

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Bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, tax evasion and cronyism, are just types of corruption prevailing in the country. The U.N. lists corruption as "one of the biggest impediments" to achieving its 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which include the elimination of poverty and hunger, as well as improved education, well-being and infrastructure. The Corruption Perceptions Index for the public sector showed 49 points in Mauritius for 2018.

In the context of the International Anti-Corruption Day to be celebrated on 9th December, the UN is raising an awareness campaign in combating and preventing corruption. UN highlights that corruption poses a significant threat to countries around the world; it undermines democratic institutions, contributes to governmental instability

Corruption

gain prison wrongdoing bribe exchange
 accept agreement banknote
 crookedness mafia crime
 remuneration
 economy
 finance cash fraud dirty

and erodes trust. "Corruption threatens the economy by undermining fair competition and discouraging investment and trade. It disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups by preventing social inclusion, promoting inequality and inhibiting prosperity."

According to Rajen Bablee, Executive Director of Transparency Mauritius, there are two main types of corruption: Grand and petty. But he also

says that there is systemic corruption and local or isolated corruption. "In general, it is easier to tackle petty corruption, as it involves fewer actors, at least two. Political corruption is another aspect which includes nepotism and political funding, among others."

He states that Mauritius is an interesting case study in many aspects. "Many Mauritians see corruption everywhere, alleging that Government,

institutions and public officers always have hidden agenda for their personal gains and interests. Let's take the general elections of 7th December 2019: There has been a lot of allegations of rigging but we see only the Opposition, that is, politicians or their agents, who are coming forward with that argument and producing what they consider rightly or wrongly as evidence."

He argues that in corruption, there is both the corrupt and the corruptor. "If we go with the idea that there has been rigging and money elections, then the corruptors would be the politicians and the corrupt would be the population. Members of the population, including the silent and intelligent component, would be parties to that alleged rigging in the sense that they have not reported that they have been bribed, or ap-

proached to be bribed or paid to vote for any particular party or politician."

He states that the same population tend to forget that they constitute the society; they are government and they are the institutions. "If some people believe that they can relinquish their power in exchange of one private gain, then the whole notion of democracy in Mauritius is flawed. It is important that all those allegations be fully investigated and that we all know, once and for all, whether they are true or whether it is only a spin strategy. That being said, Mauritius has all the relevant laws, regulations and codes which fully empower everyone to participate in the fight against corruption."

He points out that the effects of corruption are manifold and include lack of trust from investors which may re-