

India has highest bribery rate in Asia: Transparency International

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India has the highest bribery rate in Asia and the most number of people who use personal connections to access public services, according to a new report by corruption watchdog Transparency International.

The Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) Asia, found that nearly 50 per cent of those who paid bribes were asked to, while 32 per cent of those who used personal connections said they would not receive the service otherwise.

Key Highlights

- The report is based upon the survey which was conducted between June 17 and July 17 this year in India with a sample size of 2,000. "With the highest bribery rate (39 per cent) in the region, India also has the highest rate of people using personal connections to access public services (46 per cent)," the report said.
- Bribery in public services continues to plague India. Slow and complicated bureaucratic process, unnecessary red tape and unclear regulatory frameworks force citizens to seek out alternate solutions to access basic services through networks of familiarity and petty corruption, the report said.
- "Both national and state governments need to streamline administrative processes for public services, implement preventative measures to combat bribery and nepotism, and invest in user-friendly online platforms to deliver essential public services quickly and effectively," the report said.

- Although reporting cases of corruption is critical to curbing the spread, a majority of citizens in India (63 per cent) think that if they report corruption, they will suffer retaliation, it said.
- In several countries including India, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, sexual extortion rates are also high and more must be done to prevent sextortion and address specific gendered forms of corruption, the report said.
- Sextortion is extorting money or sexual favours from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity through means like morphed images.
- In India, 89 per cent think government corruption is a big problem, 18 per cent offered bribes in exchange for votes and 11 per cent experienced sextortion or know someone who has.
- About 63 per cent of surveyed people think the government is doing well in tackling corruption while 73 per cent said their anti-corruption agency is doing well in the fight against corruption, it said.
- The report said the results showed that nearly three out of four people think corruption is a big problem in their country and the survey also found that nearly one in five people who accessed public services, such as health care and education, paid a bribe in the preceding year.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*