

# Religious Norms And Corruption In Civil Servants Of Pakistan

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## Abstract

The focus of the current article was to determine the cultural contexts of corruption with specific reference to administrative norms within Pakistani society. A total of 384 respondents were selected from four public sector organizations. Data was collected through the Likert scale based questionnaire. Statistical analysis using the Chi-square test was used to evaluate and establish associations between the variables. At the bi-variate level, statistical analysis revealed that corruption perception was found to be significantly associated to certain variable. Based on the comprehensive findings of this research, a number of policy recommendations and proposals include: redefining and revitalizing religious and moral values of honesty, dedication, uprightness and patriotism at the family, educational and community levels through active participation of all societal segments with specific emphasis on media, religious leaders, teachers and politicians; the promotion of social equality in rights irrespective of power status of societal members; the devaluation and demoralization of corruption through legal punishments and social sanctions; the promotion of admirations and rewards for honesty; devising research based policies and legislation to discourage norms that

promote corruption; and the introduction of anti-corruption courses at all educational levels in Pakistani society.

**Key Words:** Corruption, Culture, Cultural Norms

### **Introduction**

Corruption in some countries is more acceptable to their indigenous peoples because of the cultural prerogative (Olivier and Jean 1999) so that corruption officials justify their actions because of the consistency of their local culture. In addition, strong, flexible rules on the prevalence of such rules help corrupt officials and corrupt forces to continue within the masses without fear of government or the system. The bureaucratic system is also nothing else in such a situation than a spirit because the balance of the state should not determine the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the acts. Gupta (1995) concluded corruption as a purely social phenomenon, but in his work for developed and underdeveloped nations with changes from culture to culture. Bribery and other illegal contacts are usually given a very negative significance in most of the developed countries. Without any other exit, payment has been linked to a solution of the problem. There are two obvious reasons for the feeling of mutual obligations: at first the idea that helping others means helping oneself does not reciprocate or self-interest in the back of one's mind. Corruption usually affects a member of an organisation, as it deviates into new generations, and therefore labels their ancestors as deviant. They are committed as elders. In traditional societies, where value change is rare, it is usually regarded as less acceptable. The results of moral violation, whether or not the existing law is violated, are usually taken without consideration. Cultural prospects are widespread in excessive or appropriate corruption actions. A loser culture can serve as a precaution to corruption by accepting corrupt practices as a cultural standard. This sense of ownership of those affected leads to legitimate, legal and consistent with the prevalent culture in the illegal actions. The social rules therefore approve of the prevalence of this type of behaviour as an increase in value for prevalent culture to promote and dissolve corruption (Yang, 1994; Chiabi, 2006; and Olivier and Jean, 1999).

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Pavarala and Malik (2010) demonstrated the example of religious values of honesty in India. The lives of Indians are religiously covered. However, the influence of religion on the personality of persons varies among people. Different people interpret religious belief and act differently. The observance of religious rituals does not mean an ethically strong and virtuous person. However, religious practitioners are believed to follow moral and ethical standards. Leading religious life creates a disciplining and moral and ethical ability for practitioners. Religious culture fabricates society in India into a unification entity, but for many it is only a series of public rituals without any connection with action and behaviour. Their symbolic and ritualistic characteristics were influenced by the traditional segment of society. According to them, religion encouraged and inspired them to prefer social good rather than personal good. They thought it would help clarify personal ethical codes and professional codes through understanding and following the core spirit of religion. Some believed that religion influences

indoor rather than outdoor activities. In comparison to economic values that change according to professional demands, religious values are inflexible. According to them, the religious perception of right and wrong should not always apply to real right and wrong.

**Beets (2007)** said that honesty and fairness form the basis for worldwide religious teachings. These lessons are helpful in the development of corruption management strategies. For two reasons religion is called upon to support religious leaders and religious groups, that is, religion discourages the robbing, delusion, offending, and abusing others. Moreover, the lack of religious leadership promotes corruption in non-believers.

**Licht et al. (2007)** argued that internalizing social norms provides practitioners with an incentive for correct action. Social norms are shared by the values that underly the standards. The automatic response to a deviation from social rules is social disapproval. Working against standards after they are internalized creates a sense of culpability and shame. Therefore, social standards provide priority and guidance on ways of achieving institutionalized objectives. The actors guide these standards in selecting appropriate actions and evaluating and justifying their actions in the appropriate place and time.

**Hauk and Saez-Marti (2002)** believe that social norms are adhered to and transmitted to the next generation depending very strongly on the proportion of the population who adhere to these social norms. Higher social adherence means that the values behind the norms are highly believed. This explanation helps to understand the occurrence of corruption in certain cultures because people do not adhere to ethical standards and values, as explained by their religion. Failure to internalize standards and values for abstinence from corruption provides low motivation in preventing corruption. Thus, in societies which have a high corruption element, individuals with similarities tend to corrupt them more than in societies with low corruption.

The conceptualization of corruption by **Heilman and Laurean (2002)** had a unique view. They said that by making it a step towards political and socio-economic development, the concept of corruption could best be understood as being an individualist morality or an imperfection of the market. The understanding of corruption must focus very closely on power relations, morals, social values, ethics and the conditions under which they are upheld. In an example of Tanzania, the authors illustrated their views, where corruption is a part of the country's socioeconomic and political development. The process of corruption can be better understood and certain effective and sustainable anti-corruption strategies can be drawn up based on socio-economic and political reforms by understanding the basis for social relations of power that contribute to maintaining corruption. It would be a holistic and inclusive approach that would have greater chances of controlling corruption than other ways of controlling the threat. The author stressed that social values are regularly monitored and modified and that state institutions that aid corruption are improved. In this respect, a powerful intervention would make the masses aware of corruption evil, and empower them to take action against corrupt officials. If not, corruption will continue to be an integral part of economic and political systems.

The historical evidence of interaction between religion and State played a significant part in the determination of the level of corruption in society. **Lipset (1960)** said. Religious institutions play the watchdog role in more democratic religions. They monitor and denounce the corruption of state officials. The monitoring role of religion is invisible in state-sponsored religions in which the religion and sponsored by the state are associated to support each other's actions. For the same reasons, in religious societies with democratic reasons, corruption remains for longer periods hidden. The political system gives the media and the public interest a freedom of expression to expose the abuse of corruption. The religious leaders of this system are in close contact with the masses, allowing them to look closely at the functions of officials and discover and publicize their abuse of power. Also strongly connected with economic development is the promotion of democratic traditions. The obvious reason for this is the promotion of democracy, education, literacy and economic awareness. Bureaucratic relations in such societies substitute for personal relations that improve the chances of noticing and controlling society's differences.

**Banfield (1958)** said that religion is an important background variable that influences corruption indirectly through its impact on culture and traditions. There are two ways that religion affects corruption. The religious traditions influence the masses in accordance with the hierarchical chain of command. The religions therefore rarely challenge the office holder if they emphasize hierarchy of masses and the employees in the subordinate position. In more equal religions, people become more democratic and do not hesitate to challenge corruption. Religion also shapes people's perspectives towards family members, relatives and other citizens. The family's religious grounds can promote more nepotism by promoting special religion favours.

### **Religious Norms**

Religion is the fundamental social institution that shapes its followers' standards and beliefs system. Religious teaching internalizes norms and values which offer intrinsic motivation and commitment. Diverging from mutually shared standards causes social disapproval and gives the perpetrator a feeling of disgrace and guilt. These strong internal and external control forces require compliance and compliance with standards.

**Table** provides the view of respondents on religious standards. A majority of 94.3% felt that corruption knowledge was necessary to reduce corruption, 4.4% refused this and 1.3% did not know. In the same vein, a majority (95.1%) said that religion refines social ethical values, 3.9% did not agree, 1% was uncertain. Likewise, 94.8 percent of respondents agreed that religious standards are massive in order to favour moral advantage over materialistic advantages. The perception that 96.4% of respondents accepted the practice of religion to reduce corruption was no different, 2.9% and 0.8% were negative. It is clear that religious standards generally direct societies to develop cultural standards. A strong religious grip on the social system would rarely allow members of the group to act corruptly because of the prescribed and forbidden rules. **Licht et al. (2007)** concluded that awareness of good and bad is expressed in society by the social standards that prevail. Religious norms underpin the

belief that the masses are correct and wrong and then they have to follow the correct behaviour. The religious disapproval of immoral acts is accompanied by their associated feelings of shame and guilt. Therefore, the actors take guidance in selecting actions and assessing people and events and justifying their own actions from religious norms. Akerlof (1980) stressed the persistent effect of social standards in shaping human behaviour. These standards contribute to the development of conditional human cooperation. Ethical norms avoidance develops a sense of social loss and a moral cost, which therefore controls the behaviour of human beings. Emotions of guilt and shame may include the moral costs of corrupt actions.

Moreover, a majority of 86,2% of respondents agreed that religious leaders had done what they needed to inform the masses about the evils of corruption, 13% denied it, and 0,8% were uncertain. Furthermore, 57.3% of respondents agreed that religious scholars actively tried to differentiate between fair and unfair earnings in society, 41.1% denied this view and 1.6% did not know. The majority of 88.8% also agreed that billboards could decrease corruption by displaying religious teachings, while 9.6% disagreed. In addition, the majority of 89.3% of respondents noticed that the promotion of religious standards in educational institutions could control corruption and that 9.6% denied it. Moreover, 83.9% of the respondents believed that by imposing Islamic punishments corruption could be reduced, while 14.6% contradicted the idea. Similarly, 74.2% assumed that Ulema's (Clerge's) silence encouraged corruption, while 24.5% opposed that view. In order to curb corruption the position of religious leaders is essential. Extensive exhibition with divine hearing of religious teachings / rules and regulations could prove crucial in the elimination of this disease from society, because Beets (2007). It can decrease corruption by using religious lessons. Religious leaders support it because awareness of religious teachings by religious leaders will help people to avoid corruption, according to the author. Religious leadership

**Table Frequencies and Percentage-wise Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their Perception of Religion Norms**

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Knowledge of religion is necessary to reduce corruption.	362(94.3)	17(4.4)	5(1.3)
Religion refines social values and ethics under its shadows	365(95.1)	15(3.9)	4(1.0)
Religious norms strongly influence masses to make them prefer moral over materialistic wellbeing.	364(94.8)	16(4.2)	4(1.0)
Practicing religion necessarily reduces corruption.	370(96.4)	11(2.9)	3(0.8)
Religious leaders keep masses aware of the evil of corruption to contain corruption.	331(86.2)	50(13.0)	3(0.8)
Religious leaders are active in interpreting fair and unfair earning in light of religious teachings through "ijtihad".	220(57.3)	158(41.1)	6(1.6)

Display of religious teachings on billboards is effective in reducing corruption.	341(88.8)	37(9.6)	6(1.6)
Promoting religious teachings in educational institution can reduce corruption.	343(89.3)	37(9.6)	4(1.0)
Imposition of Islamic mode of punishments can reduce corruption.	322(83.9)	56(14.6)	6(1.6)
Silence of Ulema against corruption encouraged corruption.	285(74.2)	94(24.5)	5(1.3)

### Association between Perception of Religious Norms and Corruption

Religion teaches honesty and fairness as a universal institution. Religion is an effective source of social control and spiritual well-being for its members. Religion's main functions include molding the behaviour of human beings, which allows conscience to overcome evil desires through ethics. The concept of supernatural forces and beings and the concept of disobedience-related curse are the main forces that ensure that the human behaviour is regulated in social interests. Thus, the religious norms provide foundation for such practices that integrate society in line with societal desires and promote withdrawal from evils like corruption. Faithful attachment to religion ideally causes withdrawal from corruption. The concept of religious norms in its association to corruption perception was limited to few statements as explained below;

**Table Association between Perception of Religious Norms and Corruption**

Statements	Perception	Corruption		Total	Chi-Square (P=Value)
		Agree	Disagree		
Religious leaders keep masses aware of the evil of corruption to contain corruption.	<b>Agree</b>	316(82.3)	15(3.9)	331(86.2)	$\chi^2=79.321$ (0.000)
	<b>Disagree</b>	29(7.6)	21(5.5)	50(13.0)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	1(0.3)	2(0.5)	3(0.8)	
Knowledge of religion is necessary to reduce corruption.	<b>Agree</b>	325(84.6)	37(9.6)	362(94.3)	$\chi^2=0.899$ (0.638)
	<b>Disagree</b>	16(4.2)	1(0.3)	17(4.4)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	5(1.3)	0(0.0)	5(1.3)	
Religion refines social values and ethics under its shadows.	<b>Agree</b>	329(85.7)	36(9.4)	365(95.1)	$\chi^2=0.639$ (0.727)
	<b>Disagree</b>	13(3.4)	2(0.5)	15(3.9)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	4(1.0)	0(0.0)	4(1.0)	
Religious norms strongly influence masses to make them prefer moral over materialistic wellbeing.	<b>Agree</b>	326(84.9)	38(9.9)	364(94.8)	$\chi^2=2.317$ (0.314)
	<b>Disagree</b>	16(4.2)	0(0)	16(4.2)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	4(1.0)	0(0.0)	4(1.0)	

Practicing religion	<b>Agree</b>	335(87.2)	35(9.1)	370(96.4)	$\chi^2= 4.134$
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necessarily reduces corruption.	<b>Disagree</b>	8(2.1)	3(0.8)	11(2.9)	(0.127)
	<b>Don't know</b>	3(0.8)	0(0.0)	3(0.8)	
Promoting religious teachings in educational institution can reduce corruption.	<b>Agree</b>	314(81.8)	29(7.6)	343(89.3)	$\chi^2= 11.392$ (0.003)
	<b>Disagree</b>	30(7.8)	7(1.8)	37(9.6)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	2(0.5)	2(0.5)	4(1.0)	
Imposition of Islamic mode of punishments can reduce corruption.	<b>Agree</b>	299(77.9)	23(6.0)	322(83.9)	$\chi^2= 21.312$ (0.000)
	<b>Disagree</b>	41(10.7)	15(3.9)	56(14.6)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	6(1.6)	0(0.0)	6(1.6)	
Silence of Ulema against corruption encouraged corruption.	<b>Agree</b>	266(69.3)	19(4.9)	285(74.2)	$\chi^2=15.103$ (0.001)
	<b>Disagree</b>	75(19.5)	19(4.9)	94(24.5)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	5(1.3)	0(0.0)	5(1.3)	
Religious leaders are active in interpreting fair and unfair earning in light of religious teachings through "ijtihad".	<b>Agree</b>	203(52.9)	17(4.4)	220(57.3)	$\chi^2= 3.862$ (0.145)
	<b>Disagree</b>	137(35.7)	21(5.5)	158(41.1)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	6(1.6)	0(0.0)	6(1.6)	
Display of religious teachings on billboards is effective in reducing corruption.	<b>Agree</b>	310(80.7)	31(8.1)	341(88.8)	$\chi^2=4.487$ (0.106)
	<b>Disagree</b>	32(8.3)	5(1.3)	37(9.6)	
	<b>Don't know</b>	4(1.0)	2(0.5)	6(1.6)	

### Summary

Perception of respondents regarding religious norms unveil that 94.3% respondents felt knowledge of corruption as necessary to reduce corruption, 95.1% affirmed that religion refines social values and ethics, 94.8% agreed that religious norms make masses to prefer moral benefits over materialistic benefits, 96.4% accepted that reduction in corruption by practicing religion. In addition a majority of 86.2% respondents agreed that religious leaders were performing their duty of informing masses about evils of corruption for containing it, 57.3% agreed that religious scholars are active in their efforts to distinguish between fair and unfair earnings in the society, 88.8% agreed that displaying religious teachings on billboards could reduce corruption, 89.3% respondents noticed that corruption could be controlled by promoting religious norms in educational institutions, 83.9% were of the view that corruption could be reduced by imposition of Islamic punishments and 74.2% assumed that silence of Ulema (Clergy) promoted corruption.

The association between perception of religious norms and corruption affirmed that corruption perception had a significant association with role of religious leaders in awareness rising about corruption ( $p=0.000$ ), promoting religious teachings in educational institutions to curb corruption ( $p=0.003$ ), imposition of Islamic mode of punishments to reduce corruption ( $p=0.000$ ), promotion of corruption due to silence of Ulema (clergy) ( $p=0.001$ ). Conversely the association of corruption perception was non-significant with knowledge of religion ( $p=0.899$ ), refinement of social values by religion ( $p=0.727$ ), preferring moral over



materialistic wellbeing due to religious norms ( $p=0.314$ ) and practicing religion ( $p=0.127$ ), active role of religious leaders in interpreting fair and unfair earning in light of religious teachings ( $p=0.145$ ) and effectiveness of displaying religious teachings on billboards to reducing corruption ( $p=0.106$ ).

## Conclusion

Finally, religion and religious leaders played a major role in curbing corruption. Among the masses, religious instruction was valued highly. However, it required support for a critical understanding of religious morality and misdeeds. They observed religious practices; In order to interpret the message and communicate it to the masses, religious leaders were in the appropriate position to motivate or forbid the masses to abstain. Additional support to reduce the risk of corruption might be the advancement of religious values in educational institutions.

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