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Q4

(a) "Corruption causes misuse of government treasury, administrative inefficiency and obstruction in the path of national development." Discuss Kautilya's views.. . (b) How could social influence and persuasion contribute to the success of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS IV · 12 marks · Probity in Governance

Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Core demand of the question

- (a) "Corruption causes misuse of government treasury, administrative inefficiency and obstruction in the path of national development." Discuss **Kautilya's** views
- (b) How could social influence and persuasion contribute to the success of **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**?

Revision summary

- **Kautilya treated a leaking treasury as a failing State:** embezzlement methods, hidden "fish in water", spies, ledgers and punishment.

Corruption wastes funds, fogs administration and blocks development works.

His diagnosis still fits audit, e-procurement and anti-corruption law; his autocratic methods do not all travel.

Swachh Bharat needs hardware and a new social norm.

Persuasion works through social proof, authority, identity, reciprocity and dignity, not humiliation or caste dumping, and not fake open-defecation-free paint.

Introduction

Part (a) reads **Kautilya's** Arthashastra on why a leaking treasury is a failing State. Part (b) asks how social influence and persuasion, not only fines, can make **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** a habit.

Body**(a) Kautilya on corruption, treasury and development**

- **Kautilya** treats the treasury as the root of the State. If it is stolen, the army, irrigation and famine stores fail, which is obstruction of national development in ancient language.
- **He lists many ways officials embezzle:** false weights, leftover grain, delayed wages, fake expenditure, and collusion with traders. The point is that corruption is a system of methods, not one bribe.
- **He compares officials to fish in water:** one cannot see when they drink. Supervision must therefore be continuous, not a rare raid.

- Spies, surprise inspections, multiple ledgers, and rotation of posts are his administrative answers to inefficiency born of graft.
- Punishment is severe because the king's duty (rajadharma) is protection; a thief in office is a thief of that protection.
- He also warns the king against luxury and greedy tax, so that corruption is not only a clerk's sin but a court culture.
- **Misuse of treasury:** every unaccounted pana is a canal not dug. Administrative inefficiency: a corrupt hierarchy hides information, so orders do not travel. Development: without a full treasury and honest officers, forts, roads and relief collapse.
- **Present echo:** the Comptroller and Auditor General, e-procurement, the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**, and Direct Benefit Transfer are Kautilyan in spirit - watch the fish, shorten the hand in the till, publish the ledger.
- **Limit:** Kautilya's State is autocratic and harsh. Today's ethics keeps his diagnosis of capture and drops torture as a method.

(b) Social influence, persuasion and **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** (launched 2014) aims at sanitation, toilets and a shift from open defecation and public filth to a social norm of cleanliness.
- Law and latrine construction are necessary. They are not sufficient if shame, habit and caste ideas about who cleans still rule the street.
- **Social influence is the pull of people we watch:** family, caste panchayat, school, film, faith and the local officer.
- Persuasion is reasoned and emotional appeal that changes attitude without a lathi as the first tool.
- **Reciprocity:** a panchayat that first delivers water and a pit-emptying service can then ask for toilet use; asking for behaviour without service feels like a sermon.
- **Social proof:** when a ward's majority uses toilets, the rest copy. Published coverage, community monitoring and "open defecation free" claims work only if they are true, not painted.
- **Authority:** doctors, teachers, faith leaders and the Prime Minister's public broom were authority cues; they fail if the sarpanch's own courtyard is filthy.
- **Liking and identity:** messages in the local language, women's groups, and school children as household persuaders beat a Hindi poster in a distant dialect.
- **Scarcity and pride:** a village that treats a dirty pond as a stain on honour uses esteem as influence.
- **Foot-in-the-door:** start with a school toilet and a market ban on litter, then widen.
- Fear and disgust can start attention; lasting change needs dignity, not humiliation of the poor as "dirty people".
- **Caste is the ethical trap:** persuasion must not dump cleaning on one community while others "supervise".
- **Combine with law:** municipal fines, Swachh rankings, and the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013**, so persuasion is not a substitute for rights.
- Officers should use gram sabhas, self-help groups, and honest data, and should empty pits and pay sanitation workers fairly, or persuasion becomes a photograph with a broom.

Flow diagram

Kautilya -> Protect the treasury
Protect the treasury -> State works and relief
Swachh Bharat -> Toilets and services
Swachh Bharat -> Social influence and persuasion
Toilets and services -> Cleanliness as norm
Social influence and persuasion -> Cleanliness as norm

Conclusion

Kautilya saw corruption as a hole in the treasury, a fog in administration and a brake on the State's works. Watch, record, punish, and keep the king himself from loot. **Swachh Bharat** succeeds when toilets exist and when influence - proof, authority, identity and dignity - makes cleanliness a norm, without caste dumping or fake declarations.

Facts & figures

Kautilya, Arthashastra

A classical treatise on statecraft that catalogues official embezzlement and prescribes supervision, spies, accounts and penalties.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, 2014

The Union sanitation mission for toilets, waste and a public norm against open defecation and filth.

Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013

The statute that must sit beside any cleanliness campaign so that "swachh" does not mean caste labour.

Comptroller and Auditor General of India

The constitutional auditor of public money; a modern ledger against **Kautilya's** fish-in-water problem.

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

The principal Union criminal statute on bribery and related misconduct by public servants.

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