

# **DARK STREETS**

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## **Research Report on Corruption in India**

with

**Special Focus on Corruption and Lawlessness in Delhi's Cooperative Group Housing Societies**

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*Photo: Rakesh Raman*

July 2018

By Rakesh Raman

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**Today, political and bureaucratic corruption is rampant in India and no government is willing to stop corruption. Delhi is also under the control of corrupt forces that have made the city a crime capital of India.**

**With an overview of the corruption in India, this report focuses on Delhi's cooperative group housing societies where millions of people are suffering because of corruption and lawlessness.**

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## REPORT SUMMARY

As the corruption methods have always been evolving in India, the contemporary system of corruption has assumed the form of an organized trade in which corruption has become a non-issue in the country.

Today, no government in India is willing to stop corruption because it has become the lifeblood of Indian bureaucrats and politicians. All major **global anti-corruption organizations** observe that corruption has been increasing at an alarming pace while the government has no plans and procedures to stop corruption in the country.

Even the **Supreme Court of India** has expressed its serious concerns about the mounting corruption and has asked the present government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to **appoint Lokpal**, the top anti-corruption ombudsman in India.

The author of this research report - **Rakesh Raman** - is a national award-winning journalist and social activist. He has been covering local and international corruption issues for years. Now he runs an exclusive community-driven free online social service under the banner "**Clean House**" to help the suffering residents of Delhi raise their voice against the growing corruption in group housing societies where millions of people live.

He has interacted with hundreds of residents and various government and law-enforcement officials in order to understand and report about corruption and other illegal activities in Delhi's cooperative group housing societies.

He also has formed a free Education and Career Counselling Center for deserving children at a poor J.J. Colony in Dwarka, New Delhi under his NGO – RMN Foundation.

Earlier, he had been associated with the United Nations (UN) through United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as a digital media expert.

This report gives a macro **overview of corruption in India** and focuses on the increasing corruption worth billions of dollars in housing complexes of Delhi where millions of people live.

Now it is not only the bureaucratic and political corruption that is troubling ordinary Indians, but in the recent years small groups of white-collar criminals have started operating like **extortion gangs in the group housing** societies. These gangs

operate under the garb of managing committee (MC) members in different group housing complexes.

The report reveals massive **corruption and illegal activities** in Delhi's Cooperative Group Housing Societies (CGHS) which are supposed to be regulated by the Delhi Government.



Office of the Registrar Cooperative Societies (RCS) of Delhi Government

Although the office of the Registrar Cooperative Societies (RCS) of Delhi Government is supposed to control the society MCs, it has repeatedly failed in fulfilling its responsibilities honestly. The archaic **RCS rules are also not effective** to ensure smooth and transparent operations in the housing societies.

As a result, the MCs of various housing societies are involved in **serious crimes** such as financial frauds, extortion, blackmailing, human rights violations, labour rights abuses, criminal intimidation, environmental damage, illegal surveillance, and extreme corruption.

While millions of common residents are victims of the **terror unleashed by the corrupt MC members** of different cooperative group housing societies, these residents are not ready to raise their voice against the growing injustice because they fear reprisal from corrupt MC members.

The report highlights a nexus between MC members and government officials who are mostly supported by corrupt politicians and deep-pocketed builders. It also

mentions the names of government departments which are part of the growing racket.

The report further describes various crimes in housing societies with the help of case studies and offers certain recommendations assuming that the government may use them to check corruption and lawlessness in Delhi's Cooperative Group Housing Societies.

**Invitation  
for  
New Research Project on Corruption in India**

The author of this research report - **Rakesh Raman** - has planned to start a comprehensive research project to compile an exclusive report on corruption in India. The project will begin in August 2018 and it will take almost 3 months to complete it.

It will carry information including data, interviews, and case studies from primary as well as secondary sources. Individuals, organizations, students, educational institutions, volunteers, and other professionals are invited to collaborate in the project.

Indian donors may please send their contributions using the following bank details:

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

Corruption has become an integral part of independent India while all State governments as well as the Central government have been encouraging corruption instead of removing it.

While political corruption is rampant, bureaucratic inefficiency is the worst form of corruption.

The survival of politicians and political parties depends on corruption money which is used to purchase voters, legislators, and commit all sorts of electoral frauds.

Estimates suggest that India is losing around \$1 trillion annually to corruption. This amount is nearly 36% of India's GDP.

Bureaucrats work hand in glove with corrupt politicians to circumvent the law and indulge in corrupt practices.

There is no administrative mechanism for general public to get rid of corruption. Courts handle corruption cases, but it is extremely difficult for commoners to go to courts.

Now it is not only the bureaucratic and political corruption that is troubling ordinary Indians, but in the recent years small groups of white-collar criminals have started operating like sophisticated extortion gangs in the group housing societies.

Police and law-enforcement agencies are not trained to deal with white-collar crimes such as corruption by organized criminal groups which operate, for example, in group housing societies.

As bureaucrats lack knowledge to operate in the modern information-driven world, they are not capable to address public complaints on corruption. Most bureaucrats do not treat corruption as a crime.

Since the administrative systems have totally collapsed in the country, corruption is increasing at an alarming pace. Government officials and politicians keep sending people's complaints from one office to another like a post office, but they never take administrative decisions to catch and punish the corrupt officials. Finally, the aggrieved people are left with no other option but to approach the courts. But if courts have to do everything, why do we need the government?

Corruption has reduced India to a level of criminalized kleptocracy, in which all the four pillars of democracy have collapsed. As a result, India continues to be a poor, underdeveloped country.



Delhi has become a stinking hell because of massive bureaucratic and political corruption. As a result, poverty, pollution, sickness, and hunger are killing people of Delhi.

The sorry plight of Indians indicates that India has already become a politically unstable banana republic with rampant lawlessness, corruption, and exploitation of the ordinary citizens. It is expected that soon India will formally appear in the list of banana republics such as Botswana, Guatemala, Nigeria, Zambia, and Cuba.

If the situation is not controlled immediately, it is expected that international sanctions will be imposed on India because of government's failure to stop increasing crime and corruption in the country.

This is the first comprehensive report on corruption in cooperative group housing societies of Delhi which have added a new dimension to the corruption in the country.

Besides its circulation in India, this research report will be shared with the world's top anti-corruption organizations, industry associations, politicians, UN agencies, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Forum, and others so that they should be cautious about rampant corruption in India before entering into any cultural or business alliance with Indian government or private entities.

## CORRUPTION IN INDIA

In his Gettysburg speech of 1863, the-then U.S. President Abraham Lincoln introduced America's representative democracy as the "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Inspired by this principle of democracy, many progressive nations adopted it as the system of governance for the well-being of their people. India was one of them. However, things have gone topsy-turvy during the past 70 years - after India got independence from the Britishers in 1947.

Today, India has completely distorted Lincoln's slogan and it has become a "**country of the corrupt, by the corrupt, for the corrupt.**"

Although corruption has spread like a pandemic disease in the entire country, this report is focused on **Delhi's cooperative group housing societies** which have become dens of **corruption and lawlessness** under the criminal activities of the **managing committee (MC) members** who work hand in glove with the corrupt government officials.

As corruption has reached alarming levels, it is being observed that no government in India is willing to stop corruption because it has become the lifeblood of Indian bureaucrats and politicians.

A new "**Freedom in the World 2017**" report – released by Freedom House, a Washington-based independent watchdog organization – highlights rampant political and bureaucratic corruption in India. It reveals that corruption has a negative effect on government efficiency and economic performance.

"Though politicians and civil servants at all levels are regularly caught accepting bribes or engaging in other corrupt behavior, a great deal of corruption goes unnoticed and unpunished," the [report](#) said in its findings.

A [new study](#) reveals that corruption has increased considerably under Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's government. CMS-India Corruption Study (CMS-ICS) 2018 claims that it has covered both rural and urban locations of 13 states and 11 public services.

According to the study, 75 percent households have the perception that the level of corruption in public services has either increased or remained same during the past 12 months.



Similarly, the global anti-corruption organization Transparency International has lowered [India's rank](#) from last year's position of 79 to 81 this year. According to the Transparency data, India with a poor score of 40 is more corrupt than countries such as China, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Mauritius.

According to "India Corruption Report" released by a leading Denmark-based anti-corruption organization, companies operating or planning to invest in India face high corruption risks. The [report](#) adds that red tape and bribery continue to be widespread in the country and corruption is especially prevalent in the judiciary, police, public services, and public procurement sectors.

Another [report says](#) that India is the most corrupt country in Asia-Pacific region with 69 per cent bribery rate. In comparison, the report informs that Japan is the least corrupt nation with only 0.2 per cent bribery rate.

Likewise, India Corruption Survey 2017 [reveals](#) that corruption is largely a local problem with 84% citizens paying a bribe in a year for an issue concerning municipal corporation, police, local tax compliance, property registration, and so on.

Estimates [suggest](#) that India is losing around \$1 trillion annually to corruption. This amount is nearly 36% of India's GDP. Moreover, the [money](#) stashed by Indians in Swiss banks - where usually corruption / black money is kept - rose by over 50 per cent to Rs 7,000 crore in 2017.

As corruption has been increasing exponentially during the past few years, the Supreme Court of India has asked the government to [appoint Lokpal](#), the top anti-corruption ombudsman in India.

While political and [bureaucratic corruption](#) has become pain in the neck for commoners in India, there is no effective agency which can give relief from corruption to the suffering people.

The Lokayukta (anti-corruption ombudsman organization in the Indian states), vigilance departments of state governments, and India's top anti-corruption organization Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) are all toothless outfits that tend to protect the corrupt officials and encourage corruption. Their procedures to accept public complaints on corruption are so slow and cumbersome that ordinary citizens feel scared to file their complaints against corrupt officials.

The public grievance systems of the State as well as Central governments are also totally ineffective. After receiving complaints from the citizens, these systems send

them to some random departments in a mechanical way and abruptly close the cases without giving relief to the complainants.

Government officials keep throwing public complaints from one desk to another without taking conclusive decisions on the complaints. Finally, the aggrieved citizens are left with no other option but to approach the courts. But if courts have to do everything, why do we need politicians and government officials? The administrative systems have totally collapsed in India.

While corruption is happening openly, most corruption cases involving top bureaucrats and politicians do not get reported. As most Indian journalists are corrupt, [Indian media](#) is under the tight control of the government. When some corruption cases appear in the non-traditional media (such as news sites), government ignores them and makes [false claims](#) that no corruption is happening under the government. The truth, however, is that corruption - which has been persisting for decades under all governments - is happening at every step in the country.



Indian Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh releases Vigilance Manual 2017. Photo: CVC

Although a slew of anti-corruption [laws](#) exist in India, the rising corruption in the country indicates that these laws are not effective. The anti-corruption laws that are supposed to check corruption include Indian Penal Code, 1860; Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988; Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 to prohibit benami transactions; Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002; among others.

India is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption since 2005 (ratified 2011). The Convention covers a wide range of acts of corruption and also proposes certain preventive policies.

Moreover, the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 which came into force from 16 January 2014, seeks to provide for the establishment of the institution of Lokpal to inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries in India.

Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2011, which provides a mechanism to investigate alleged corruption and misuse of power by public servants and also protect anyone who exposes alleged wrongdoing in government bodies, projects and offices, has received the assent of the President of India on 9 May 2014, and is pending for notification by the Central Government.

While corruption can take place in many forms, punishment for bribery - which is the basic form of corruption in India - can range from six months to seven years. According to the [Vigilance Manual 2017](#) of Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), corruption is manifested in various forms such as bribery, nepotism, willful action or willful inaction to benefit someone or to deny benefit to someone known or unknown.

It also states that corruption includes cases of favoritism and failure to follow laid down processes leading to unintended benefit to someone or denial of benefit to the deserving. By this CVC definition, corruption is happening in almost every department and government-regulated outfits of India. But CVC has not been able to implement its own laws in the government offices.

As on June 30, 2017, 1962 complaints alleging various misconducts were under inquiry relating to public servants under the jurisdiction of the CVC. As the decisions on corruption cases get inordinately delayed, CVC says investigation into complaints is an ongoing process and the Commission regularly monitors the pendency with the Chief Vigilance Officers to ensure time-bound completion of the same.

The delays, according to CVC, are on account of multitude of reasons such as lack of adequate officers in certain offices, complexity of investigations, time taken to follow the laid down procedure, non-cooperation of the suspect officers, etc.

As the government does not encourage public to file their complaints, India's top investigative agency Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) could register only 139 cases against Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Services (IPS), Indian Revenue Services (IRS), and Indian Foreign Services (IFS) officers during the three years' period (from 1.1.2014 to 30.11.2017) which are at various stages.

Since the anti-corruption mechanism is dead slow in India, corruption is increasing at a rapid pace and affecting all routine activities of citizens. Now, the sorry plight of Indians under the constant threat of corruption indicates that India has already become a politically unstable banana republic with rampant lawlessness, corruption, and exploitation of the ordinary citizens. It is expected that soon India will formally

appear in the list of banana republics such as Botswana, Guatemala, Nigeria, Zambia, and Cuba.



Delhi has become a stinking hell because of massive bureaucratic and political corruption.

If the situation is not controlled immediately, it is expected that soon international sanctions will be imposed on India because of government's failure to stop increasing crime and corruption in the country.

And Delhi's cooperative group housing societies - where millions of people live - present an ugly example of corruption that has been happening across the country.

## CORRUPTION AND ITS IMPACT

Corruption is not only a crime but it is also an immoral act. Among the other descriptions of corruption, the global **anti-corruption organization** Transparency International [suggests](#) that corruption thrives on low level of transparency. Wikipedia, a leading online encyclopedia, defines systemic corruption (or endemic corruption) as corruption which occurs because of weaknesses of an organization or a process. This type of corruption can be contrasted with individual officials or agents who act corruptly within a system.

Wikipedia further states that factors which encourage systemic corruption include conflicting incentives, discretionary powers; monopolistic power structures; lack of transparency; low pay; and a culture of impunity.

Traditional Forms of Corruption		
Bribery	Extortion	Embezzlement
Factors That Encourage Corruption		
Conflicting Incentives	Discretionary Powers	Monopolistic Structures
Lack of Transparency	Low Pay	Culture of Impunity

Specific acts of corruption include "bribery, extortion, and embezzlement" in a system where corruption becomes the rule rather than the exception.

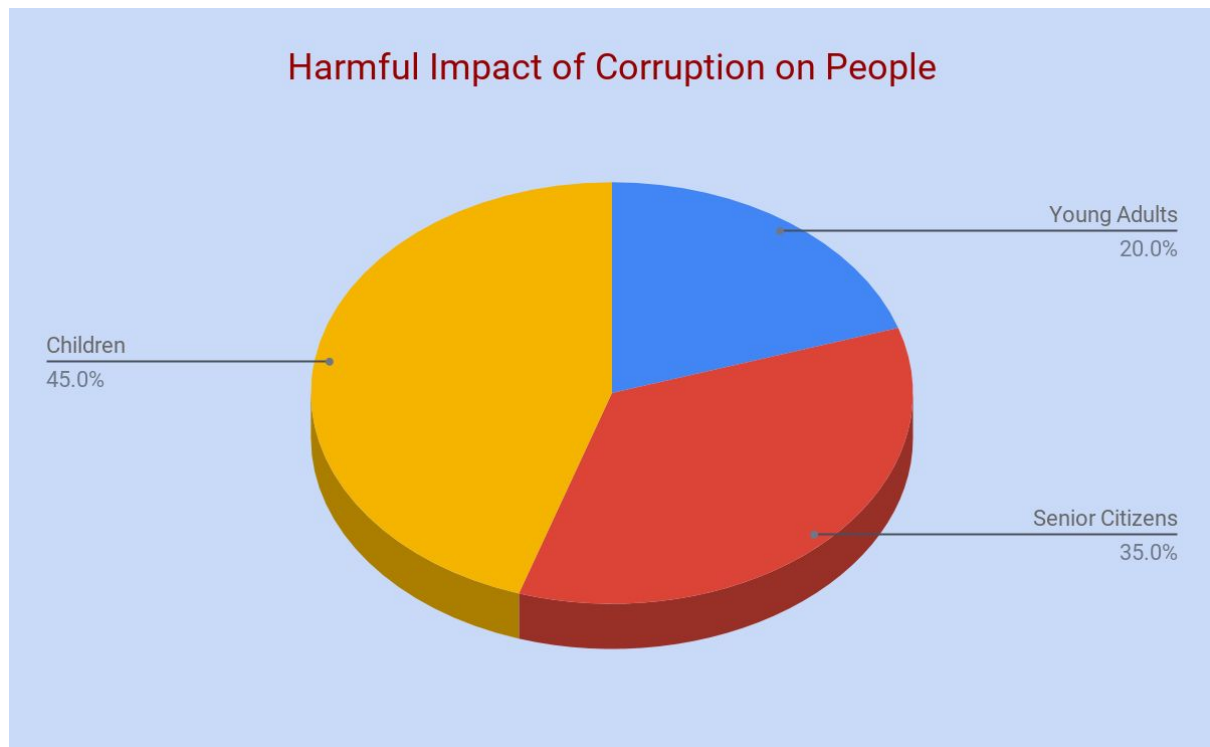
Corruption is negatively associated with the share of private investment and, hence, it lowers the rate of economic growth. Corruption, according to [Wikipedia](#), creates the opportunity for increased inequality, reduces the return of productive activities, and, hence, makes rent-seeking (practice of manipulating policy for increasing profits) and corruption activities more attractive.

"This opportunity for increased inequality not only generates psychological frustration to the underprivileged but also reduces productivity growth, investment, and job opportunities," Wikipedia says.

According to a [research paper](#) - The Impact of Corruption on Growth and Inequality - published by Transparency International, corruption is likely to adversely affect long-term economic growth through its impact on investment, taxation, public expenditures and human development.

The paper also states that corruption is also likely to undermine the regulatory environment and the efficiency of state institutions as rent-seeking distorts incentives and decision-making processes.

It is observed that corruption has multiple [adverse effects](#) on the citizens, the entire society, and the economy of a country. The effects of corruption include poor quality of public services, [unemployment](#), lack of justice, increased inequality among people, and so on. All these effects can lead to social unrest in a country.



## CORRUPTION FACTORS IN INDIA

The factors that contribute to increased corruption in India include flawed electoral [processes](#), political and bureaucratic illiteracy, lack of domain expertise among government officials, inefficient and obsolete administrative systems, lack of transparency, and weak policy implementation mechanisms.

The factors also include lack of opportunities for public to participate in the administrative reform process, archaic school and college [education systems](#), centralized administration, limited technology usage, low or no press freedom, poverty, and government's attacks on civil society organizations.

Obviously, it is almost impossible for any government in India to overcome all these challenges while the corrupt and corruption are thriving. Although Indian politicians loudly claim that they will weed out corruption from the country, corruption has always been increasing exponentially.

<b>Main Factors That Contribute to Increasing Corruption in India</b>		
<b>Flawed Electoral Processes</b>	<b>Political and Bureaucratic Illiteracy</b>	<b>Lack of Domain Expertise</b>
<b>Obsolete Administrative Systems</b>	<b>Lack of Transparency</b>	<b>Weak Policy Implementation</b>
<b>Archaic Education Systems</b>	<b>Centralized Administration</b>	<b>Limited Technology Usage</b>
<b>Low or No Press Freedom</b>	<b>Attacks on Civil Society Organizations</b>	<b>Poverty</b>

Corruption was the main factor for the debacle of the Congress-led government in 2014 and corruption will be the most crucial issue in the [Lok Sabha Election](#) that is scheduled to take place in 2019. As the Indian governments have failed to stop corruption, it is increasing rapidly in all spheres of activity - including in the housing societies of Delhi.

This is the first comprehensive report on corruption in cooperative group housing societies of Delhi which have added a new dimension to the corruption in the country.

## COOPERATIVE GROUP HOUSING SOCIETIES

The idea of cooperative societies has its origins in Mahatma Gandhi's thinking of collective development in the society by forming small groups of contributors in different spheres of human activity.

While Mahatma Gandhi believed that cooperative societies are ideally suited organizations for development in the villages, he floated the '*Gram Swaraj*' concept. In the post-independence era, however, India replicated Gandhi's cooperative model in urban areas also.



Cooperative group housing societies in Delhi

As a result, the government empowered cooperative societies so they could become change agents in the socio-economic development of the country. Cooperative group housing societies are supposed to be part of the larger cooperative movement in India.

But Mahatma Gandhi must be spinning in his grave looking at the sorry state of affairs in India's housing societies – particularly in Delhi. They have become dens of corruption under the corruption of managing committee (MC) members, while the Delhi Government has no control on them.



## **CORRUPTION IN COOPERATIVE GROUP HOUSING SOCIETIES**

Today, according to Delhi Government's office of the Registrar Cooperative Societies (RCS) - which is supposed to supervise the operations of societies - there are [nearly 2000](#) cooperative group housing societies in the city.

While the managing committees (MCs) of these societies - which are elected through flawed election processes - operate as money-grabbing gangs, they handle public money worth crores of rupees.

It is estimated that the MCs collect nearly Rs. 2,500 crore every year from residents / members of societies and the total cash that they handle is about 2 lakh crore rupees (approximately USD \$30 billion).

The total money availability with the MCs increases significantly as they frequently carry out fraudulent construction projects in the inhabited buildings. The total money in circulation - including the frequent construction activity in housing societies - is approximately USD \$50 billion. It is estimated that 20% of this amount - or USD \$10 billion - is corruption money.

Obviously, the amount of money available in the housing societies' pervasive network is enough to attract corrupt forces including MC members, government officials, politicians, and builders. Together, they are operating as a massive crime syndicate to swindle public money.

While corruption is happening openly, the government ostensibly takes some anti-corruption measures. However, since politicians and government officers are part of the corruption racket they never enforce their own policies to stop corruption. For example, in order to make society operations transparent, the government had ordered all societies to make their websites. Although over 3 years have elapsed since the order was released, most MCs have brazenly defied the government's advice.

According to the government [notification](#) from the Registrar Cooperative Societies (RCS), the step has been taken to ensure transparency in the working of the societies and to access their data online. The **website creation is mandatory / compulsory** for each housing society, the government order had specified.

The notification also stated that the government has taken the step on the advice from Delhi Cooperative Tribunal, which wants all the societies to have their own websites. The Tribunal observes that if the proceedings or the notices to the members are uploaded on the website, the litigation would decrease.

### Clean House Social Service

Today, millions of common residents in Delhi are victims of the terror unleashed by the corrupt managing committee (MC) members of different cooperative group housing societies.

In order to help the suffering residents raise their voice against the growing corruption and injustice in housing societies, I have been running a community-driven free online social service under the banner "[Clean House](#)".

It works as an interface to inform the government departments and law-enforcement agencies in India and abroad about the cases of corruption and other criminal activities happening in housing societies.

If you want "Clean House" to report about the corruption and illegal activities in your housing society, you may please contact me with relevant documents and details.

[Click here to visit Clean House.](#)

The litigation has been increasing because the RCS office and other concerned offices have failed miserably to provide relief to the residents who are victims of irregularities and nefarious activities of the MCs in different societies.

The RCS office had directed the MCs of societies to submit their website address to the RCS office within 45 days from the date of the notification. The office also warned the MCs that if they failed to comply, actions as per law may be initiated.

However, only a handful of societies have made their **websites which do not carry information to ensure transparency**. The MC members use the society websites to propagate only their own interests while they do not upload the important communications such as purchase procedures and objections / suggestions from other members on the websites.

Thus, the MCs are openly defying RCS orders but the RCS office does not take any action against the MC members because there seems to be a strong nexus between MC members of different societies and the officials of RCS.

## FLAWED FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING IN SOCIETIES

While the MC members of each housing society control **public money worth crores of rupees**, they always tend to gobble up that money blatantly. In most societies, same members keep holding office positions by hook or by crook. They offer various types of **bribes to voting members** to win elections fraudulently. Their procedures for holding General Body Meetings (GBMs) are totally flawed. They do not follow statutory purchase processes. Their accounting procedures are defective.

Most societies try to hoodwink their members by distributing printed audit reports and annual returns, which conceal more than what they reveal. These reports and returns are meaningless in the absence of purchase procedures, which most societies do not follow.

Irregularities in the Operations of Cooperative Group Housing Societies	
Flawed Election Processes	Faulty Procedures to Hold GBMs
Dubious Financial Processes	Static Administrative Systems
Lack of Transparency	Weak Communications
No Accountability of MC Members	Incompetence of MC Members

The societies are supposed to upload on their websites all financial and purchase information along with related documents – such as need for purchase, expenditure approval process, request for quotations (RFQs), tendering procedures, criteria for selection of vendors, payment terms, project monitoring, quality assurance, and so on.

However, since the societies prefer to work in a totally shady and opaque manner, they do not reveal such information to the individual residents and the government. As a result, they squander public money at will and just distribute crude annual reports and returns, which are not sufficient to present a true financial accounting picture.

This is nothing but corruption on the part of MCs and the government has failed to take any action against the MC members of different societies who are responsible for these financial irregularities that result in fleecing the residents of the societies.

Incidentally, most residents are not even aware that they are being cheated by the MCs because they find it difficult to decipher the complex accounting reports.

As corruption is rampant, the MC office bearers are always eager to make a fast buck and spend individual members' money unscrupulously without taking proper approvals. They also plan and execute unnecessary (and sometimes illegal) high-value construction projects within the society buildings without following the proper approval and expenditure norms.



Deadly dust and noise pollution is caused by illegal construction in a cooperative group housing society of Dwarka, New Delhi

If the government – as part of a thorough inquiry – could ask the past and present MC members of all housing societies to declare their assets, it will find that most have **assets disproportionate** to their known sources of income. Obviously, their assets should be attached by the government and they must be punished.

## LAW-BREAKING DECISIONS

The general body meeting (GBM) approval process is totally flawed and the government / RCS office has not bothered to streamline the process despite numerous complaints by the society members.

Moreover, the residents suggest that the GBM approvals – if taken in a transparent and truthful manner – should be applicable only to petty issues such as cleaning, gardening, or cultural activities in the societies. The GBMs must not be used to take financial decisions that are usually imposed on members.

But MC members of different housing societies are exploiting the flawed GBM process and majority rule to even **challenge the Indian constitution and law**.

As corrupt MC members impose their own ill will on residents, in many societies they have gone so berserk that they even ignore [court orders](#) and continue their criminal pursuits.

For example, the increasing number of cars is a major irritant in Delhi because of traffic hassles and increasing vehicular pollution. The Delhi High Court has [ruled](#) that only **one car per flat** will be allowed in housing society parking lots.

But Delhi Government has failed to check the menace and playing hand in glove with the corrupt managing committees of the housing societies that allow residents to park multiple vehicles inside the society premises under some secret deals with the law-breaking residents.

Worse, these corrupt residents supported by MCs gang up to show their majority in the GBMs and get even the illegal decisions approved, as it is happening, for example, in illegal [extended construction](#) projects currently happening in multiple housing societies.

They even threaten the innocent residents who oppose MCs' illegitimate acts. The [threats](#) from criminal MC members to opposing resident include false police complaints against them, legal cases, warnings of physical harm, and even death threats. [Delhi Police](#) knows about these threats and other criminal activities, but because of bribery and corruption, police officers refuse to take any action against the corrupt MC members. The police force is utterly delinquent and has become part of the corruption racket in housing societies.

Here is another example of lawlessness. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) of India observes that one of the major sources of air pollution is dust emission from

construction activities. NGT rules that such construction must be [stopped](#) to avoid pollution-related diseases and deaths of people including men, women, and children.

The NGT has been enacted under India's constitutional provision of Article 21, which assures the citizens of India the right to a healthy environment.

However, the MCs of housing societies are treating the NGT's advice with total disdain, as illegal construction under the dubious floor area ratio ([FAR](#)) rules is rampant in societies where people are living.

It is believed that the MCs are taking approvals from different government departments for extended construction by bribing the government officials in concerned departments such as the [DDA](#) (Delhi Development Authority) and other urban development authorities.

While the Delhi Government has failed to check this construction-based pollution in the occupied societies, it should carry out a thorough investigation in the extended construction cases and demolish all the FAR extended constructed structures in inhabited housing societies.

Government must punish the guilty government officials and MC members who have flouted the government norms so that new construction projects could be stopped. Extended construction in existing societies also results in [human rights violations](#), as the Government of India has expressed the idea that every citizen has a right to clean air.

Dust pollution will be harmful not only to the societies where construction is happening, but it will engulf the surrounding areas also, making it difficult for millions of people (including children) to breathe. It is also surprising to note that on one side the Delhi Government is trying to reduce vehicular [pollution](#) in the city, but on the other it is allowing construction-related dust pollution in housing complexes – which is more hazardous for people who are living there.

The crimes being committed by MC members of housing societies include financial frauds, extortion, blackmailing, human rights violations, labour rights abuse, criminal intimidation, environmental damage, illegal surveillance, and extreme corruption.

## FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP CORRUPTION

The MC members of the cooperative group housing societies have to deal with various government departments to run the society affairs. However, the RCS office of the Delhi Government is responsible to ensure corruption-free environment in the societies and protect the rights of residents.



Illegal car parking at a housing society in Dwarka can cause fire mishaps.

However, it is seen that **RCS officials are not discharging their duties honestly** and they usually do not take any action against the corrupt MC members. Most would know that the RCS office has a long [history of corruption](#) and many of its officers have been caught even by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

**The main government departments that are systematically supporting the corrupt MC members of different housing societies are:**

- Registrar Cooperative Societies (RCS) of the Delhi Government
- Delhi Development Authority (DDA)
- Office of the Lt. Governor (LG) of Delhi
- Office of the Chief Minister and other Ministers of Delhi
- Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCD)
- Delhi Fire Service (DFS)
- Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC)
- Delhi Police

Some of the **active cases** of corruption and illegal activities at various housing societies are given below. You can click the case weblink to read the full report.

<b>CORRUPTION CASE STUDIES</b>			
<b>Case</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Report Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<a href="#"><u>Inquiry of IAS Officer</u></a>	RCS	July 9, 2018	Inquiry Initiated
<a href="#"><u>Illegal Surveillance</u></a>	Delhi Police	July 2, 2018	Complaint Filed
<a href="#"><u>Bureaucratic Corruption</u></a>	RCS	June 11, 2018	Inquiry Expected
<a href="#"><u>Complicity in Corruption</u></a>	RCS	May 29, 2018	Case in Progress
<a href="#"><u>Corruption in FAR</u></a>	DDA	May 21, 2018	CVC Inquiry
<a href="#"><u>Corruption and Fraud</u></a>	RCS	May 19, 2018	Inquiry Delayed
<a href="#"><u>Illegal Construction</u></a>	Court Case	May 14, 2018	Construction Stopped
<a href="#"><u>Corruption Inquiry</u></a>	RCS / CVC	May 1, 2018	Pending
<a href="#"><u>Risk of Fire</u></a>	Fire Service / RCS	April 14, 2018	No Action
<a href="#"><u>Labour Rights Abuse</u></a>	Labour Court	March 13, 2018	Summons Issued
<a href="#"><u>Obstruction of Justice</u></a>	RCS	February 26, 2018	Illegal Obstruction
<a href="#"><u>Financial Fraud</u></a>	RCS / DDA	January 29, 2018	Inquiry Planned
<a href="#"><u>Criminal Intimidation</u></a>	Labour / Delhi Police	January 21, 2018	Notice Ignored
<a href="#"><u>Corruption Inquiry</u></a>	RCS	January 3, 2018	Notice Issued
<a href="#"><u>Tree Offence</u></a>	RCS / DDA	December 26, 2017	Notice Issued
<a href="#"><u>Slavery Case</u></a>	RCS / Labour	December 20, 2017	Inquiry
<a href="#"><u>Blackmailing and Extortion</u></a>	RCS	December 17, 2017	No Action
<a href="#"><u>Corruption Notice</u></a>	Society MC	December 10, 2017	Response Demanded



<a href="#"><u>Human Rights</u></a>	RCS / Delhi Police	May 15, 2017	Suppressed
<a href="#"><u>UBBL Violation</u></a>	DDA / RCS	August 30, 2017	No Action
<a href="#"><u>Labour Exploitation</u></a>	RCS / Labour Dept.	October 3, 2017	Notice Issued
<a href="#"><u>Fraudulent Contract</u></a>	RCS / DDA	October 16, 2017	Response from DDA
<a href="#"><u>Illegal Construction</u></a>	DDA / RCS	October 24, 2017	No Action
<a href="#"><u>Illegal Car Parking</u></a>	RCS / DFS	October 30, 2017	No Action
<a href="#"><u>Corruption and Conspiracy</u></a>	RCS	November 20, 2017	Reported

Despite complaints from residents, corrupt government officials do not take any action against corrupt MC members. Finally, the distressed residents are left with no other option, but to approach the courts. But do they get justice from courts? The less said about the Indian courts, the better.

## REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Today, an estimated one-fifth of people – in Delhi's population of over 20 million – reside in group housing societies. These residents need to be saved from the cruel hands of corrupt MC members and government officials.

Most of the MC members or office-bearers of resident welfare associations are totally incompetent to manage society affairs in a professional manner but they enjoy mysterious protection from corrupt government officials.

The residents who willy-nilly support the MCs in their misdeeds are equally ignorant and thus culprits who should be punished according to the law. Surprisingly, some of these culprits are government employees or employees of the organisations that are regulated by the government.

If the government wants to stop the rising tide of corruption, it must take strict action against such employees who have become part of the racket and support illegal activities in housing societies.



Cooperative group housing societies in Delhi

A similar onus is also on private organizations which are supposed to control their mischievous employees who are directly or indirectly involved in any illegal or immoral activities happening at the housing societies.

There is no denying the fact that avoidable building construction around human beings is a wrongful act. It also promotes corruption. Since construction or massive building repair involves huge money which can be easily swindled, it is the root cause of corruption. So, corruption in the name of construction must be stopped.

The government must also realize that Delhi is already among the world's most [polluted and dirtiest cities](#). If the construction is not stopped in the existing housing societies of Delhi, the city will become a virtual hell for all living beings.

Then the DDA may have to change its slogan from “Proudly We Build The Capital Of India” to “Slowly We Destroy The Capital Of India.” Is the government ready for this perilous transition?

More importantly, the law-enforcement agencies should carefully study the [complaints from citizens](#) and immediately take punitive actions against the rogue MC members and corrupt employees of departments such as DDA and RCS.

In order to protect the interests of millions of people living in the cooperative group housing societies of Delhi, the Home Ministry of the Government of India through the office of the [Lt. Governor](#) (LG) of Delhi must create a special department to handle the complaints of the residents in a time-bound manner.

## TECHNOLOGY INTERFACE

Such a complaints monitoring department should be fully computerized eliminating the need for complainants to meet the government officials who harass them during physical interactions in order to extort bribes from them.

The online interface or “help desk” of the complaints monitoring system should be made available in such a way that the complainants should be able to view the progress of their cases remotely on their computers or mobile devices. The government should take immediate action against the employee if a case gets stuck.

But there are chances of resistance. As most bureaucrats and [politicians in India](#) are uneducated or they lack domain expertise, they do not know how to use information technology-based systems such as emails, social media, and video conferencing to deliver citizen services. They also lack communication skills that are required to respond to public complaints over digital channels.

These bureaucrats and politicians shamelessly call common people – including women and senior citizens – to their offices to hear their complaints which are hardly resolved. It is estimated that nearly one-third of the traffic on roads is of people who go to meet government officials while all these meetings can be avoided by using digital communication channels. This avoidable traffic is also increasing pollution levels in the city.

While bureaucrats and politicians work like viceroys of the British colonial era, they take sadistic pleasure when people stand outside their offices and bow in front of them. These forced official meetings are also increasing corruption which is already rampant in government offices.

The eCommittee of the **Supreme Court of India** and the **Department of Justice** (DoJ) of the Government of India have observed these difficulties that commoners are facing.

The [eCourts Mission Mode Project](#) – which is a national eGovernance project for technology enablement of courts in the country – encourages the use of digital technology including video conferencing to resolve different cases.

Therefore, the government officials who do not know how to use digital systems to provide government services have no right to call public to their offices. The government should also terminate the services of such naive officials who cannot keep pace with the modern digital world.

In the case of housing societies, the offices like the RCS and DDA which are known for their corrupt practices should be directed that they should never call common people or complainants to meet their officials. They can call only the accused managing committee (MC) members to question them.

The government must realize that the current online complaint filing systems in all government offices are utterly useless. There is a need to create dynamic digital interfaces where the complainants should be able to monitor the movement of their complaints (along with official remarks) at every stage of their case.

Such interfaces will also increase transparency and reveal the performance of government officials for delivering online citizen services.

The government must understand that the current administrative system that is supposed to ensure a corruption-free environment in Delhi's cooperative group housing societies is totally dead. There is a need to create a new system of governance. The sooner the better.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. As the RCS office has failed to discharge its duties responsibly, the government must not allow it to handle the affairs of cooperative group housing societies.
2. The government should set up a dedicated quasi-judicial department with domain experts and professionally qualified people to deal with matters related to all group housing societies.
3. The new cooperative housing department must use robust technology interfaces to interact with public. It should also create separate Web-based subdomains for each housing society in order to ensure full transparency.
4. The new department should have its branches in different group housing areas of Delhi and it should provide single-window services to residents.
5. A qualified full-time government administrator should be appointed in each housing society. The salary of the government administrator should be paid from society funds.
6. The current RCS rules are mostly redundant and irrelevant. So, a new set of rules should be created for the societies to run their operations efficiently.
7. The election process in the cooperative group housing societies must be totally revamped. Only educated and skilled people should be allowed to contest society elections.
8. The elected members should be asked to declare their assets periodically in order to reduce chances of corruption.
9. As the administrative systems are generally slow, police and law-enforcement agencies should be given more powers to check crime and corruption in group housing societies.
10. The new cooperative housing department should run regular community outreach programs to increase public participation in the reformation process.

*By [Rakesh Raman](#), who is a national award-winning journalist and social activist. He is the founder of a humanitarian organization [RMN Foundation](#) which is working in diverse areas to help the disadvantaged and distressed people in the society.*

## About Rakesh Raman



Rakesh Raman is a government's national award-winning journalist and social activist. Besides working at senior editorial positions with India's leading media companies, he had been writing an edit-page column for The Financial Express, a business newspaper of the Indian Express group.

Nowadays, for the past about 7 years, he has been running his own global news services on different subjects. He also has formed an environment-protection group called [Green Group](#) in Delhi. He has created a comprehensive online information service to educate the Indian voters for the upcoming [Lok Sabha election](#) scheduled to happen in 2019.

He is also running a community-driven free online social service under the banner "[Clean House](#)" to help the suffering residents of Delhi raise their voice against the growing corruption and injustice in group housing societies where millions of people live.

Recently, he has released a comprehensive [research report](#) "*Dark Streets: Research Report on Corruption in Delhi's Housing Societies*" that focuses on massive corruption and illegal activities in Delhi's Cooperative Group Housing Societies.

He also has formed a free Education and Career Counselling Center for deserving children at a poor J.J. Colony in Dwarka, New Delhi under his NGO – [RMN Foundation](#).

Earlier, he had been associated with the United Nations (UN) through United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as a digital media expert to help businesses use technology for brand marketing and business development.

### Contact

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**You may please [contact me on my email](#).**

***Disclosure:** I have written this report not only as a journalist, but also as a victim of the fraud and intimidation happening in a Delhi Housing Society. I am facing repeated threats because I am raising my voice against corruption, lawlessness, environmental damage, and human rights violations.*