



“Corruption in State Town and Country Planning Departments in India”

Collective inputs from over 55,000 Citizens on

“Fighting Corruption Together”

(Current state, Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)

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Corruption in Town and Country Planning Departments

Executive Summary

Urban planning as currently practised in India is essentially concerned with planning the use and development of land in cities. The tendency to play fast and loose with planning laws and development control rules when it comes to big land owners in urban areas is deliberate, as it gives a lot of discretion to public officials and is the biggest source of corruption in local government. The ultimate losers, as always, are the unfortunate citizens.

The 55,000+ strong “Fighting Corruption Together” online community has come together to collectively identify the key issues, root causes and solutions for the Corruption in Town and Country Planning in India and the community expects that actions will be taken towards implementing the identified solutions.

Issues Identified:

1. Bribes are given to get clearances for starting building projects
2. Babus accept bribes for providing fire and safety clearances for new buildings without even doing actual checks
3. Your files do not move till the time you pay a ‘file moving’ fee mostly collected by the peons
4. One would be asked to make repeated visits to the department office till they are ready to pay bribes
5. The department officials are offered bribes in the shape of money or flat in the name of relatives to get their irregularities approved
6. For individuals the sanction of plan takes months together, but for most builders the plans get approved immediately as they pay bribes
7. The department initially neglects the irregularities but after some underhand transactions it later regularizes them
8. Even a simple Rs. 5 form is sold at Rs. 500 saying that it is in shortage
9. They provide fitness certificate for dilapidated buildings after accepting bribes
10. Public lives are put under risk due to bribery and corrupt officers in this department

Root Causes Identified

1. The department employees take bribes to make money on the side
2. It becomes easy to get clearances if you are ready to pay bribes
3. The clearances stay stuck in files if one is opposed to paying bribes
4. The officers have a lot of authority with which they harass people and force them to pay bribes
5. Department employees accept bribes under their relatives names so that they don't get into scrutiny
6. Builders have a nexus with the department officials
7. The rules and regulations of the department are hard to interpret for the common man
8. Information is not given out voluntarily
9. Every work needs a lot of human interaction
10. The department is still not completely computerized
11. There is no time frame defined to complete any work

Solutions Identified

1. The submission of architectural plan should be made online
2. Each task/file should have a defines turn-around-time
3. Visiting offices personally should not be allowed
4. The fees payments should also be done using debit/credit cards
5. Officials caught in corrupt practices should be immediately suspended
6. After digitization of T & C P department/Estate Offices, the requisite forms/formalities should be uploaded on the website of the department
7. The applicant should get regular sms about the status of his application
8. The applicant should only be called to the office in case of an emergency that that too with a written approval of the HoD
9. The discretionary powers of the officers should be reduced and everything should be made process driven
10. CCTV cameras should be placed in the department offices for monitoring
11. All forms should easily be available online and free of cost
12. The rules and regulations should be clearly mentioned on the department website

Corruption in Town and Country Planning Departments – A few citizen posts and comments:

1. All the municipalities should upload the forms in their portal about property tax etc. the form should be filled and submitted in the portal only. There should be payment gateway to pay. In Avadi municipality it is not there. Property tax in the same floor is different for the individuals....there is no parity.– **Arupratan Sit**
2. Apart from the facts listed above by contributors, shabby town planning is done purposely so that more rework means more contracts means more money means more kickbacks. Like I posted regarding Bhubaneswar in my first two posts. Encroachments are allowed on monthly bribes fixed with encroachers. If encroachers are to be shifted then approve compensation by taking bribes and approval and payment of compensation also depends on person to person depending upon the offers. Poor and honest fellows are the worst sufferers in this process – **Vijay Kanaujia**
3. The concept of Town Development Authorities seems to be basically to take away this onus from the municipalities. But the concept has its genesis in making a corrupt money making department for the governments. The important post of town planner is mostly the promoted chief draughtsman of the department. The vice chairman as person of no architectural or engineering background but a bureaucrat who is close to the ministers. The multiplicity of responsibility of planning and maintaining a town by municipality, the PWD and the Development Authority makes it more a muddle than a dedicated town development procedure. Hence the corruption – **Sudhil Paul**
4. I would suggest the immediate suspension and prompt enquiry of officials caught in corrupt practices. In case the enquiry is not completed in time bound period of suspension then the head of enquiry team should also be suspended. It may so happen that concerned officials may not appear for the enquiry and under this situation after giving three notices at week's period the enquiry should be completed in absentia. Further, the power of corporators to reinstate the corrupt officials should be removed as has been seen in cases of a few Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra where officials in town planning with proven corruption charges and amassing wealth in crores were reinstated by General Assembly. In addition to that if government permission is required for prosecution, it should be granted in a month's time and if not given it should be presumed as granted otherwise - **Mohan G. Andhansare**
5. Delhi has multiple authorities for sanctioning of projects. For many projects sanction is required from many of them. We cannot apply simultaneously. The simplified building bye laws are also as out dated as the old one. Greater NOIDA has excellent

rules for sanctioning which Gurgaon is also following. Though MCD has on line sanction but the plans are finally sanctioned by the AE in zone/ headquarter. Why cannot the sanctioned plan be issued online when all sorts of undertakings and affidavits absolving MCD of any responsibility are given by architect and owner? –

Prabhat Kumar

6. Transparency can be achieved by making it compulsory to submit all applications on line and give a Reference no. automatically and post online the movement of the application from in the Department with Remarks of each Officer which can be tracked by the applicant and monitored by higher officers – ***Puthumbaka Ravi***

Kumar

7. If the Government and the administration wish, the entire process can be made transparent, discretionary powers are removed from all levels, availability of Forms can be online, file movement can be made traceable online, and movement to each location and final approval dates may be provided online.

Rejection and grounds for rejection may also be provided online.

If the improvement are not brought about, it only speaks of lack of will of the government – ***Amitava Sur***

8. There should be time frame for every file that comes to the department. When a file comes to the department it should be marked with entry date and proposed date of completion and the file should be attended within the time frame. If there is any unattended file in the department, the official in charge should be taken to task and also his promotion should be linked with the processing of the file. For every file he delays his promotion should be delayed by a specific amount of time – ***Ramesh***

Narayanappa