

### Section 3: Module 3

The author's goal is to use corruption as a way of doing an 'ethnography' of the state. Conducting ethnography on the state is different because than other ethnographies because basic questions of how to gather data or what is a state arise. There are also issues with collecting data 'in the field' since one can have trouble knowing what is authentic or not or even if being 'authentic' is important.

Most people interact with the state through their local government in India. There are usually large groups of people at state entities like hospitals, police stations, etc. The first story describing the role of the state concerns two low level bureaucrats who deal with land ownership. The author tells a story of how they tried to get two young men to bribe them, something they were accustomed of doing. The next story is about a man who was part of a program to build people houses. All of the activities that he had to do to get money for his house required him to pay more money. When the man went to complain about this, his employer became upset and threatened to physical harm him. Nevertheless, the man eventually was able to get a lawyer to write a letter to the administrative head of the area about his employer. However, he was not successful with the housing program and was asked to pay money to complete the house. The representative from the housing program threatened the man with his relative who was a warden. These incidents show that all classes had some knowledge of the state hierarchy and how it worked. Development programs are interesting part of the state because it puts different parts of the state against each other.

While the previous episodes showed local officials utilizing their power even when villagers are upset, they can also face consequences. The author tells of a story where an engineer required bribes to be able to put in a transformer in a reasonable amount of time. However, when the same people needed a transformer again, instead of paying bribes again, workers camped out in front of the engineer's house demanding a transformer be put in. Their protest worked and one was put in without any bribes.

All of these stories show that low-level officials were for many the main interaction people had with the state. The author also states that it is important to note that even though the low-level officials were corrupt, they had pressure from higher up implying they should be corrupt. He claims that corruption is everywhere just that at the senior level, a few wealthy people pay the state employee while at the low level, the employee gets their money from a variety of people, which makes it more public.

Public culture plays an important role in corruption. Media is important and especially, newspapers, which circulate information. Corruption was the main topic of elections during the 1980s. A big scandal emerged, when the 'non-corrupt' prime minister had been taking bribes from a Swedish arms manufacture. Different newspapers had different responses to the scandal. A big difference occurred between English-language newspapers and magazines and local newspapers. Local newspapers focused on the state structure and how it relates to local levels of the state while they were barely mentioned in the larger newspapers. Another difference, was that local papers did not refer to the state as one entity, but would name different departments responsible for particular actions.

Talk of corruption and wanting accountability has increased significantly in recent times, especially after colonialism. What discussions of corruption enable is the ability of people to construct what they think of the state and to be able to identify as citizens.

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