

## INCREASE IN WEALTH OF POLITICAL LEADERS AFTER HOLDING POLITICAL OFFICE AND ARTICLE 39(B) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

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### Abstract:

This research paper examines the distributional pattern of wealth accumulation among political leaders in India when accounting for the workplace. It highlights the implications of this phenomenon for accountability, governance, and moral behavior. Article 39 (b) of the Directive Principles of State Policy serves as a constitutional framework for increasing the equitable distribution of beneficial resources. The article analyzes how policymakers' emerging focus on wealth contradicts this prescription, examines the mechanisms enabling this accumulation, and discusses the wider implications for Indian authorities. It ends with a recommendation aimed at harmonizing political practices with the ideals enshrined in Article 39 (b).

**Keywords:** Political wealth, Corruption, Article 39(b), Governance, Equitable Distribution, Accountability, Directive Principles, Policy manipulation, Anti-corruption reform

### Introduction:

In India, the phenomenon of political leaders drastically expanding their wealth after taking office has emerged as a pressing problem. This manner raises fundamental questions about accountability, governance, and ethical behavior among public officials.<sup>261</sup> Article 39(b) of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) constitutes a constitutional mandate aimed at increasing the equitable distribution of wealth for ordinary diamonds.<sup>262</sup> This paper examines how the growing awareness of wealth among political leaders contrasts with the ideas enshrined in Article 39(b) and the results for governance in India.<sup>263</sup>

### 1. Background

The problem of the accumulation of wealth by political leaders is not new, but it has gained importance as an overwhelming problem

affecting the public acceptance of truth in governance. Various studies and analyses reveal a chronic pattern where politicians enter office with modest means and grow riches over the years, often with dubious attitudes. This creates a large disparity between the expectations of the public provider and the reality of political behavior. The growth of wealth among political leaders raises concerns about the motivations that drive these individuals to turn graft-ridden and the moral implications for a democratic society.<sup>264</sup> Moreover, this trend reflects broader systemic problems in India's political framework, where the lines between public service providers and personal advantage are increasingly blurred. It raises fundamental questions about the integrity of political institutions and the effectiveness of existing safeguards against corruption.<sup>265</sup>

<sup>261</sup> Sharma, Political Corruption and the Wealth of Elected Officials: A Study of the Lok Sabha, 15 (2022).

<sup>262</sup> INDIA CONST. art. 39(b).

<sup>263</sup> National Election Watch, *Analyses of Candidate Wealth Declared During Lok Sabha Elections*, 9 (2021).

<sup>264</sup> National Election Watch, *Analyses of Candidate Wealth Declared During Lok Sabha Elections*, 12 (2021).

<sup>265</sup> Khanna, *Public Office and Private Gain: Conflict of Interest in Indian Governance*, 34 (2020).

## 2. Increase in Wealth among Political Leaders:

### 2.1. Disclosure of Assets:

➤ Research conducted by agencies including **National Election Watch** and the **Association for Democratic Reforms** documented a dramatic boom in the declared wealth of politicians upon taking office.<sup>266</sup> For example, an evaluation of the Lok Sabha, 2019 elections revealed that many candidates declared asset values significantly higher than those declared in previous elections. This trend often means leaders double or triple their wealth shortly after their election victory. The statistics illustrate a pattern that demonstrates the malicious use of political power for personal enrichment.

➤ The implications of these findings are far-reaching. When public officials amass wealth without clear and justifiable explanations, it erodes public confidence and faith in the governance. The ostentatious display of wealth by politicians raises approximate doubts about the integrity of political techniques and questions whether elected officials are honestly serving the pursuit of their constituents.

### 2.2. Case Studies:

➤ Concrete examples of this disturbing trend provide significant evidence of the iniquitous accumulation of wealth among politicians. Cases involving former chief ministers and union ministers often show unexplained increases in their declared assets. In many cases, these leaders have been linked to government contracts, land deals, and business interests that thrive on their political influence, further complicating the landscape of accountability and transparency.

➤ For example, audits of certain politicians have uncovered networks of transactions that indicate collusion between public officeholders and private enterprises. These transactions often involve awarding government contracts to companies linked to political leaders,

acquisition of prime land at undervalued prices, and preferential policymaking that benefits private interests. Such case studies highlight the urgent need for rigorous scrutiny of the financial activities of elected officials. Strengthening accountability frameworks is essential to curb these practices, as unchecked wealth accumulation compromises governance, deepens economic inequality, and hampers public trust in political institutions.

➤ The *Common Cause v. Union of India*<sup>267</sup>, is a significant case that discusses corruption and wealth accumulation by public servants.

## 3. Mechanisms of Wealth Accumulation-

Several mechanisms contribute to the accumulation of wealth by political leaders:

**3.1. Government Contracts:** Politicians often have the power to award lucrative contracts to companies in which they or their family members engage in tied entertainment. This practice is not the most adept as it increases the prices of public initiatives, but it additionally ends up with commissions that likewise tend to improve the financial position of these leaders. Manipulation of public resources for personal gain is a hallmark of corrupt governance, leading to significant imbalances in resource allocation.

**3.2. Corruption and Bribery:** The occurrence of corrupt practices within the political establishment allows politicians to accept bribes, allowing them to seriously increase their wealth through illegitimate methods. Such practices undermine the integrity of the public workplace and exacerbate the lack of conviction among citizens. The normalization of bribery as a way of doing business creates an environment in which moral issues are overshadowed by monetary incentives.<sup>268</sup>

**3.3. Policy Manipulation:** Political leaders often approve or regulate policies that serve their business interests or hobbies in their households. This manipulation creates inherent

<sup>266</sup> National Election Watch & Ass'n for Democratic Reforms, Lok Sabha Elections 2019: Analysis of Candidates' Assets.

<sup>267</sup> *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 10 S.C.C. 1 (India).

<sup>268</sup> Sharma, Political Corruption and the Wealth of Elected Officials: A Study of the Lok Sabha, 27 (2022).

conflicts of interest that, in my opinion, allow politicians to favor themselves even when it is ostensibly to serve the public. The ability to influence political decisions for private gain raises serious ethical issues and reduces the legitimacy of governance.<sup>269</sup>

### **Article 39 (b) of the Directive Principles of State Policy**

#### **Article 39(b) states:**

"The ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to sub-serve the common good."<sup>270</sup>

#### ➤ Implications of Article 39(b):

##### **1. Equitable Distribution of Resources**

The principle enshrined in Article 39 letter b) emphasizes that wealth and assets must benefit the community at large rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few. This fair distribution is important for promoting social and monetary justice and ensures that the gains from monetary improvement are beneficial to all citizens. Failure to adhere to this principle not only adversely affects financial stability, but also perpetuates social differences that can lead to unrest.

##### **2. Contrary to Current Trends**

The unreasonable surge of wealth among political leaders is at odds with the ethos of Article 39(b). When politicians value themselves at the rate of public property, it undermines the principles of equitable distribution, and the values enumerated under Article 39(b) are kept at stake. This contradiction points to a systemic failure in a political framework where the entertainments of the wealthy elite are prioritized over the wishes of the general population.

##### **3. Impact on Governance**

Failure to enforce the standards of Article 39(b) ends up in proceedings that favor the interests of the wealthy elite. This dynamic perpetuates inequality and social unrest and limits the potential of authorities to address pressing

issues including poverty, unemployment, and the right to access basic services. The erosion of public acceptance in the political institutions similarly complicates the governance landscape and makes meaningful reform difficult to achieve. Disenfranchisement fosters an environment where the public feels disenfranchised, contributing to a cycle of apathy and disillusionment with the political process.

#### **Implementation Challenges:**

Despite the constitutional mandate that Article 39(b) provides, several challenging situations prevent its strong implementation:

**1. Weak enforcement mechanisms:** There is mostly a loss of political will to apply laws and directives aimed at reducing corruption and ensuring accountability among public administration officials. This state of no activity creates an environment conducive to malpractice and undermines the integrity of governance. The absence of strong enforcement leads to the belief that politicians can act with impunity, further eroding public confidence.

**2. Cultural Acceptance of Corruption:** In many regions, corruption has been apparently normalized with the belief that it is by far a necessary part of political existence. This cultural reputation creates significant barriers to reform and discourages citizens from demanding it. The normalization of corrupt practices undermines efforts to promote a political lifestyle rooted in ethics and transparency.

**3. Limited Public Awareness:** Loss of public awareness of their rights and DPSP provisions limits the ability of residents to pressure political leaders to adhere to these principles. Without a well-informed citizenry, the cycle of corruption and wealth accumulation among politicians is most likely to continue. The demand for instructional tasks aimed at empowering residents cannot be overstated because informed residents are essential for increasing accountability in governance.

<sup>269</sup> Khanna, Public Office and Private Gain, 45 (2020).

<sup>270</sup> INDIA CONST. art. 39(b).

### **Recommendations for alignment with Article 39(b):**

To address the differences between the accumulation of wealth among political leaders and the ideals enshrined in Article 39 (b) several suggestions can be made:

#### **1. Strengthening Legal Frameworks**

➤ There is an urgent need to enact stronger anti-corruption laws and ensure some strict enforcement to hold political leaders accountable for illicit wealth accumulation. Implementing clean tags to reveal and track assets can help you save on corrupt practices and increase transparency in public offices. Strengthening the framework for criminal activity is no longer the simplest strengthening of duty, but it also sends a strong signal that corrupt practices will now not be tolerated.<sup>271</sup>

#### **2. Transparency of Political Funding**

➤ Mandating full transparency of marketing campaign finance and asset disclosure is essential to ensure that political contributions do not now give rise to undue influence and corruption. Implementing strict campaign finance policies can help mitigate the dangers of corruption and restore public confidence within the political apparatus. Political funding transparency is important to the equal entity boom, ensuring that no man, lady, or entity can have undue influence on political elections.

#### **3. Public Involvement and Awareness**

➤ Increasing public awareness of the DPSP and promoting civic engagement are essential steps to holding politicians accountable for their movement. Education campaigns can enable citizens to understand their rights and the concepts of fair distribution of aid and promote a subculture of responsibility. Engaging the general public in discussions about governance and the importance of moral behavior among political leaders can create greater demands for transparency and integrity.<sup>272</sup>

### **Institutional Reforms:**

The establishment of impartial bodies charged with monitoring and investigating cases of corruption among public administration officials is of fundamental importance. These devices can help ensure that violations are dealt directly with transparency to improve trust in the political establishment and increase ethical governance. Independent oversight mechanisms are important to protect democratic processes and ensure public officials are held accountable.

### **Conclusion:**

The alarming trend of unethical attention to wealth among political leaders as soon as they count on office contrasts sharply with the notions outlined in Article 39 (b) of the Directive Principles of State Policy. To promote a just and virtuous society, addressing these disparities through criminal reforms, greater transparency, and active public involvement is the need of the hour. By aligning political practices with the constitutional mandate of equitable distribution of resources, India can work towards a model of governance that truly serves the common good. Achieving this alignment is not the simplest basic prerequisite for restoring public opinion, but also for ensuring that the benefits of governance reach all residents, thereby contributing to an ethical and scrupulous society.

Restoring public consent as true and ensuring the equitable distribution of useful resources are essential for promoting a just society. Citizens, civil society, and authorities must work together to develop a political environment that favors integrity and accountability. Only through these efforts can India move towards a model of governance that serves the public at large in a true sense with the constitutional ideals enumerated in Article 39(b).

<sup>271</sup> India's Anti-Corruption Mechanisms: A Study, 51 (2021).

<sup>272</sup> Campaign Finance in Indian Elections: Need for Transparency, 38 (2021).