

Casting off the shackles of greed, corruption, and deceit

Recipe for a new world order

Global equity and sustainability cannot be achieved until the dominant paradigm of greed, corruption, and deceit, which permeate all levels of governance and commerce, is overhauled. Dr Roy I Bhikharie is exploring if and how the UN system is responsible for supporting the economic growth of the elite at the expense of the broader population. Based on this work, a roadmap based on humanistic principles and systemic reforms is proposed for building a more just socioeconomic landscape around the globe.

Owing to systemic failures of national and global governance, society has failed to overcome greed, corruption, and deceit to achieve global equity and sustainability. Many, if not the majority of countries follow unfair practices, such as exploiting cheap labour, which worsen poverty and inequality. Greed-induced corruption and false claims and pledges prevent the consistent application of laws and foster a culture of lobbying. Political leaders uphold corrupt paradigms and concepts within a mafia-like culture of power and impunity, preventing change. In a trickle-down

process, this culture of political greed, corruption, and deceit is also reflected in the actions of private enterprises, the global elite, and organised crime syndicates. In short, we live in a world order where money talks and those with political and economic power can act as they please with impunity.

Dr Roy I Bhikharie is exploring if and how the United Nations (UN) system is responsible for supporting the economic growth of the elite at the expense of the broader population. In particular, Bhikharie has investigated the role of the

UN in facilitating a 'mafia-like culture of power with impunity' characterised by authoritarianism, which stimulates low moral standards, psychological captivity, stunted human development, irrational preferences, societal divisions, and negative herd behaviour. This is how the UN's practices can inculcate false concepts, reduce cognitive-affective functioning, and wrap the perceptions of the world's population, preventing them from confronting the injustices it promotes. Based on his work, Bhikharie advocates for a paradigm shift that embraces more humanistic approaches to governance, as well as systemic reforms. His proposed recipe for improved global governance offers a roadmap for building a more just socioeconomic landscape around the globe.

A BROKEN SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

In the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index, more than two-thirds of countries scored below 50 on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), with 155 countries showing no significant progress against corruption or a decline since 2012. In addition, governments unjustly decide the values of wages or pensions that individuals can keep and determine salaries for officials without public consent. Up to 25% of global public spending is lost to corruption, and no country provides its people with a decent and sustainable life. The international poverty line of 2.15 USD per day neglects basic human needs like sanitation, water, and electricity, ultimately legalising a form of modern slavery. More than 25% of the global population lives in an area of high urban crime and violence. Despite sufficient food production, nearly 80% of the global population lives in impoverished conditions. At the same time, the world's richest 1% seized nearly 66% of all new



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global wealth, which was approximately twice as much as the remaining 99% earned during this period. And for every dollar of tax revenue, only four cents come from wealth taxes. Such unequal ownership of capital results in gross economic inequalities. Moreover, this situation is self-reinforcing, with studies showing that exposure to luxury leads to feelings of superiority, opening the door to more self-interested behaviour and reduced moral judgement. Even worse, many men and women worldwide are murdered because they take a stand against crime, injustice, or corruption. On average, four environmental activists are murdered every week globally, and

for a strong constitutional democracy and separation of powers. Laws may be in place, for example, those related to corruption, but they are not enforced. The electoral system is not fit for purpose; parliamentary make-up fails to be representative of the country, and a fragmented landscape of political parties and movements resulted in a fractured social fabric that pits one man against another. As a result, in the years since independence, billions of dollars of international aid flowing into Suriname have been wasted, lost in a black hole of inefficiency and corruption. Within this murky darkness, multinational corporations have proceeded

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corporations and corrupt governments are likely to co-conspire in these murders. Representatives of civil society are in physical danger and often murdered with impunity, while 9 out of 10 people hold fundamental biases against women.

Bhikharie takes Suriname as a representative example of this global socio-political-economic malaise. During the transition to independence, which was completed in 1975, former colonial rulers, the Netherlands, failed to put in place strong governmental institutions and practices. Under these conditions, the new government simply took on the 'slave master' role and failed to strive

unchecked, with notable examples from the bauxite and gold mining industries, which have allowed serious and largely unchecked environmental damage. Political frustration and weak governance have resulted in two military coups and periods of political violence, for which no justice has been pursued. This stark example clearly illustrates the power of international partners in enforcing/encouraging (or not, as the case may be) good governance, psychological freedom, and sustainable business practices in smaller, less powerful states. Trickle-down economics gives way to trickle-down socio-political-economic deterioration.

While Bhikharie criticises the UN and other international organisations for perpetuating these issues, his proposed roadmap provides a basis for such organisations to implement urgent systemic reforms, which are meant to remove the systemic weaknesses of the UN and empower people to challenge its injustices. In this way, addressing systemic challenges goes hand in hand with fostering self-worth, inner freedom, and trust among people. These qualities can intermediately modify cognitive processes and facilitate a global humanistic paradigm shift, which enables the development of a peaceful, just, and sustainable world order.

RECIPE FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD ORDER

Bhikharie argues that cosmetic rebranding of old politics is not a solution to the current crises. Instead, we need a humanistic paradigm shift in the culture and practice of good governance and psychological freedom. The proposed 'recipe' for creating such global governance is based on the need to eliminate the culture of greed, corruption, deceit, lobbying, and impunity to ensure consistent application of the law and foster global equity and sustainability. In other words, it provides the ammunition for a psychological battle of good (systemic reforms) against evil (old politics). Bhikharie notes a number of critical actions that the UN and national governments should adopt:

1. The UN, after the above-mentioned systemic reforms, must carefully consider the membership status of corrupt states.
2. States should be rewarded for the implementation of good governance practices, including: taxation equality, creation of decent work, rule of law, legal and political accountability, financial regulation, investment in education, investment in social and cultural development and well-being to allow people to live with dignity, legal protection of gender equality (among other protected characteristics, such as age, gender, and disabilities), etc.
3. States should be rewarded for actively promoting capacity building and personal development among the population – for example, developing and implementing education and employment policies that encourage



individuals to follow their aspirations, nurture independence, and promote feelings of self-worth. The idea is that strong, assured individuals can achieve both higher productivity and levels of contentment, while at the community level strong, assured individuals will create strong, assured communities with the strength to reject greed, corruption, deceit, lobbying, and impunity.

4. States should respect (legally and culturally) the right to dissent and protest as a means to promote social justice.

Bhikharie highlights the fact that the global population has allowed the

current situation to arise. The global elite happily spreads falsehoods and treats the wider population as, in Bhikharie's words, 'brainless puppets' while the wider population accepts this as, at best, fait accompli and, at worst, does not even recognise that it is happening. Labouring under this long-established psychological captivity, people allow others to define their worth and, in turn, relinquish control over their destiny. Many are passive, failing to confront or even recognise the ever-increasing injustices. Others actively support such a system, unwilling to rock the boat when they believe that perhaps they one day might join the ranks of the rich and powerful and internalise their

values. The road to power and riches is paved by passive submission and money worship.

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Bhikharie argues that adopting the changes outlined above will ultimately place power back into the hands of the people by reducing socioeconomic inequality and increasing both individual and collective agency. With time, this approach has the potential to bring about a humanistic paradigm shift at all levels of society, including the individual, community, national, and ultimately global scales.

Obviously, facilitating such change is easier said than done, and the implementation of effective new policies is often problematic. Bhikharie argues that the process should not be seen as a linear trajectory. Instead, it is a dynamic process that starts by sharing visions and perspectives for achieving social equity and ultimately provides policy instruments to support, monitor, and steer the real-world attainment of these ideals. In contrast to the existing, broken and debunked system of trickle-down economics, this approach works on the theory of trickle-up; that is, change must start from the bottom. When individuals are given the space to grow and flourish (physically, emotionally, economically, culturally, and intellectually), their immediate communities will unite and start to flourish too; when strong communities unite together, the nation will flourish. When nations unite together, the international community will flourish.

Bhikharie places the UN at the centre of the need for change, as it is the only organisation with sufficient reach to impact on governments around the world and should therefore lead by example. The UN must fight to stamp out corruption, deceit, electoral fraud, divide-and-conquer politics, nepotism and oligarchy, lobbying, censorship, poor separation of powers, conflicts of interest, and human rights violations. At the same time, it must work to promote international and domestic policies that facilitate sustainable socio-economic development and 'positive herd behaviour'.

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Behind the Research

Dr Roy I Bhikharie



E: bhikharieroy@gmail.com

Research Objectives

Dr Roy I Bhikharie proposes a roadmap for a more just socioeconomic landscape around the globe.

Detail

Bio

Dr Roy I Bhikharie is an external thesis supervisor at ADEK University of Suriname and IBW University of Applied Sciences, Deputy President of the United Nations Association Suriname, an experienced appointed psychologist, corporate executive, and management consultant with a dual PhD in business research and administration. His interests include leadership and good governance.



References

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Personal Response

You suggest that the UN use a carrot-and-stick approach to encourage change. The 'stick' is reconsidering the membership of countries that don't make the necessary changes. At a practical level, what is the 'carrot'? That is, how can the UN reward countries for 'good behaviour'?

For 'good behaviour', the UN should grant these countries full membership and could present them with a special award, plus putting them in a position to help certain countries adopt similar values, as they have the experience. The 'stick' could be a conditional membership for a certain period, in which countries must meet all the missing requirements.

