**Ease of Living Index (ELI) Manifestations, Antecedents and Consequences**

# Preamble

Slogan of the season *Ease of doing business*  is a fall out of compulsive enthusiasm to attract foreign investment, retain borderless domestic investors & catalyse domestic investment.

Global credit and investment rating agencies periodically release their veiled threat of downgrades on credit rating and investment climate, to perennially keep the situation under guard, for the investors. *Ease of doing business* in the country (I believe) refers to the ease with which, potential businesses are able to get through various approvals, licenses, permissions and papers processed; predictability and consistency of tax laws; quality and delivery efficacy of physical, social and institutional infrastructural services; that are critical to businesses.

Preoccupied with *ease of doing business* what is lost sight of is the *Ease of Living,* the superset of *ease of doing business*, which subsumes *ease of doing business*. *Ease of living* does not refer to retirement destinations (paradises) that claim to offer a variety of state supported benefits for retirees, as well as geographically unique inviting features: cool, climatically hospitable locations, senior citizen specific services, amenities and safety.

*Ease of living* is the perception based on day to day experience of average citizens; the travails one undergoes while fulfilling needs of normal day to day life. These include access to basic civic / municipal services, safety, grievance redressal, predictability, reliability of institutional support system (police, judiciary, urban local bodies, neighbourhood experience).

Lack of attention to *Ease of Living* (even the phrase has not been coined yet?) could be due to global institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and the UN have not yet started talking about it (not in their dictionary?); preoccupied with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Human Development Index (HDI), Air Quality Index and so on, which has to fade out of fashion, for new terms like *ELI* to surface.

There is also little commercial interest on *Ease of Living Index (ELI)* compared to *Ease of Doing Business.* Likely, those with business interests are not the ones who live in the place of their business and hence not concerned with the *unease* *of living;* only concerned with *unease of doing business*. Investors, a *class apart*, live in gated communities / islands of paradise during their short sojourns in geographies where they have business interests. They shield themselves from the *unease of living factors*, hiring service providers (*outsourcing*), who engage seasoned locals to bear the brunt, for a price. They create islands of comforts within an ocean of filth, for their short sojourns.

By focusing on *ease of doing business* and ignoring *ease of living*, are we not legitimising the *unease of living* and take it as given, simply because it has not been brought to surface by investors, or have accepted the *unease of living* as a small price or irritant they need to and willing to put up with.

Since *it doesn’t matter to overseas investors*, *it doesn’t matter to me* syndrome prevails, as the elite domestic investors adopt the same practices of smart overseas investors! Being home grown with hands on experience, native elites know the ways and means to make their life easy, even in locales where *ease of living* is low for an average citizen. In that sense, local elites are no worse than overseas investors; knowing what they want and how to get it shielding themselves from the pains and bruises of living on their soil.

Investors (overseas and native) invest in our country, but live in more hospitable, progressive and civilised geographies, running their business through remote control. Some do not run any physical business here, but only move money electronically, remotely extracting wealth from the *bottom of the period* (CK Prahlad meant it in a more positive sense!).

Many industrialists of local origin are NRIs (Non Resident Indians), learn the ropes here, including the great business opportunities on tap, from a large un-satiated market, opportunity to get away with crime, run the business remotely through local agents (no different from the *East India Company - Partha system reporting*; http://www.businessgyan.com/node/5315?). Because investors are nomadic and global in character, with no allegiance to any geography, they don’t care about the *ease of living*, so long as their financial interests are met.

Is it also that their business interests are better served if the *unease of living*, (preserving low quality infrastructure, poor systems and indiscipline) that feed their business from the bottom of the pyramid, is not improved; implicitly nursing an unstated interest in maintaining status quo of the *pyramid*, to feed their own business? Why kill the goose that lays the golden eggs?

*Ease of living* is critical to citizens who live here, not necessarily those who do business here, since the two need not be interlinked. If a geography offers business opportunity for outsiders, the same should be true for home grown entrepreneurs, if they also cultivate the mind-set and adopt practices of the foreign investors. Having said so, let us understand what is ease of living? Or *unease of living* that will help better understand what is *ease of living*.

Unease of living touches every facet of our day to day life, is all pervading, including business. The belief that *unease of doing business* can be tackled if we remove the pain points of concern to a business man in running his business, is myopic and at best an illusion. The *unease of doing business* and *unease of living* are closely intertwined, driven by the same set of higher order factors that is our *DNA*.

# Our Larger Contextual Setting

* Diversity of population on level and quality of education, economic status, exposure, inherited cultural mores and mental blocks, ignorance and superstition, conflicting and skewed priorities, regressive values and belief systems, attitudes to and skewed perception of what is quality of living, approach to goal achievement (ingenious short cuts over rational system driven), driven by emotional fanaticism; that pose impediments to focused, incisive, holistic, transparent, workable approach towards realising goals.
* A democratic system where the minority (educated, exposed, progressive and open to change community, preferring systems to drive action) trying to change the majority (who relish ingenious manipulation for quick results – a hit and run approach, inherited outdated medieval values with mental blocks, influenced by emotional appeals whipping up passions, irrational and fooled by empty promises orchestrated by motivated politicians, to exploit the situation for personal gain).

This contextual setting drives the ease of living as well as ease of doing business, the latter subsumed in the former. While doing business may be an option, living is not; and therefore *ease of living* is a more serious issue demanding attention.

# Typical Manifestations of Unease of Living

**Omnipresent**

1. It is easier to be smartly dishonest than be painfully honest. The system is more of sound and less of light, order and rationale. Solutions emerge by default after prolonged distress and frustration, the probability of the perpetrator of any crime being awarded actionable punishment being very low, wasting public resources, delayed just outcome, demotivating to well-meaning citizens. Since going through the formal system is stressful and outcome unpredictable and inconsistent, service providers (middle men, fixers, agents), emerge with promise of a solution, gaining an upper hand. In the process, honest citizens suffer and power shifts to the unscrupulous political class, who run the show through nefarious means. Honest citizen look a fool; those adopting short cuts, dishonest, convoluted ways emerge the winner.
2. Accountability is at its lowest across levels and domains. Asking basic questions while a rule is being framed, is considered a taboo, and expecting rule by law of the land is considered a foolish mis-adventure and smacks of immaturity
3. It is much easier to either forget or get a fixer to fix, choose the practical way and not a lawful or honest way.

**Legal System**

1. While framing laws, its implementation is given low priority. Laws are made just to create an aura that a law exists and it is anyone’s choice to abide by the law or otherwise; either way one has to pay a price.
2. Whistle blowers get eliminated, the killer escapes using emotionally appealing justification, pumping up emotional mob power, self-declared posturing and privileges that work on the street. Once the street fight is over and mob / muscle justice delivered, the episode is forgotten to give way for the next one.
3. Laws apply differently for different people depending on who one is and what connections /lineage one has. Criminals are put in prison only to be released as a matter of routine on easily available bail, at low cost, only to commit the next crime even in the precincts of the prison. Prison sentence is not a deterrent to dissuade one from repeating a crime.
4. Many regressive rules ae made based on medieval thinking to cater to fringe groups on misplaced logic. Politicians affected by the same rules find their way to get around such laws which they knew were misplaced. Ultimate victim is the law abiding citizen who foolishly believes one should follow the law. The smart ones eulogise the system in public and violate with impunity in private, under cover. There are two systems at work: the smart workable way and the legitimate way; the smart way is practical, need not be lawful.
5. Law makers believe they are a different and elite class of citizens for whom none of the laws apply, if they choose to be so. However, they will use the same law against someone else, if it suits them, which they themselves don’t follow or believe in. For every problem there is an official solution, a political solution, an unofficial solution and a practical solution.
6. Above syndrome characterises the overlap between ease of living and ease of doing business. Commonalities are more pronounced than differences, and therefore understanding commonalities will help address core issues to address the root cause, leading to sustainable and comprehensive solution. Addressing ease of doing business alone amounts to fooling oneself, believing the solution is found. Such approach (managing symptoms than solving problems, shooting the messenger instead of acting on the message) is deeply ingrained in the system
7. The electoral system is skewed in favour of muscle and money power of the unscrupulous, to woo the illiterate majority, an easily purchasable commodity using cheap baits, unfulfilled irrational commitments and misplaced priorities, leading to instantaneous gratification as against sustainable progress and growth. Most policy decisions aim at temporal relief, a firefighting approach for superficial satisfaction, bartering long term interests for short term appeal of the masses.

**Basic Services**

1. Access to basic services such as electricity, water, sewage evacuation, communication, transport, clean - safe - healthy environment, recreation and education. Access comprises (a) the physical existence on record and on the ground (b) quality, reliability and availability to enjoy the same. While the former may be pronounced to exist, the real access to use is not its unqualified direct consequence. The real availability is determined by effective institutional mechanisms to provide the access without impediments of any kind (lack of transparency and equity in treatment, breakdown, quality of supply, reliability, safety, predictability, accountability, recourse to grievance redressal), responsiveness of service provider to service calls, quality of maintenance, and sustainable holistic problem resolution. Poor service quality is reflected in leaving the aggrieved with a new problem while setting right the original one, due to poor workmanship, lack of comprehensiveness and sustainability, free from danger posed to third parties due to callousness / incompetence / indifference / lack of accountability.
2. Treated potable water sent out through municipal lines for domestic consumption, gets mixed with sewage water, while criss-crossing, which is consumed as potable water, making citizens sick
3. Police stations’ reluctance to register victims’ complaints unless pressurised from superiors using *connections* or extra constitutional (mob, political minions) sources
4. Corrupt ULBs make bad roads of very short life (overpayment to contractors through manipulated tendering, 80% of which flows back into pockets of elected members, politicians and officials) and do not repair bad roads resulted from shoddy work, causing accidents. Substandard works result from incompetence of officials to demand quality work from contractors, since they have been party to the joint loot with contractors. A win-win deal at the cost of citizens’ safety and convenience. Works remain on paper (fake / inflated bills generated to extract money from the system for distributing the booty), but not on the ground. ULBs do not want their systems to be computerised or accounts audited as systems may expose illegalities. Computers are purchased only to create a trading transaction for kickbacks, with packings never opened. The machines are sold as scrap due to obsolescence, again benefiting the officials through kickbacks in sale as also in purchase!
5. No clear defined rules for payment for line maintenance services from water supply and sewerage board, leading to workers demanding unofficial payments for service calls; and holding citizens to ransom
6. No action taken by ULBs against misuse of public space by private individuals (elite) using muscle and referral power, causing public inconvenience, road rage and accidents
7. Broken roads cause road rage, accidents and vehicle damage; with no one to be held accountable, a musical chair of shifting responsibility and finally fizzling out
8. Arbitrariness guides application of rules against violation of building bye laws, one cannot enforce even gazetted laws due to inaction from corruption, lack of accountability and shifting responsibility

**Consumer rights**

1. Adulteration from seed to fertilizers, pesticides, fruits, vegetables, drugs, milk and anything, is the rule, as no expeditious action is taken on perpetrators; even cases registered, ultimately end up as damp squib, as prosecutors do an unprofessional job leaving escape routes for criminals; accused gets acquitted and continues with his business. Even criminals direct their nefarious activities sitting in jails, using mobiles, with assistance from jail staff, for a price. The dividing line between the criminal and law enforcement officials is very thin and can easily crossover

**Organised Crime / Scams**

1. Scams of various kinds: money multiplying, real estate, recruitment and employment, admissions in educational institutions, fake income /caste certificates for government benefits for disadvantaged groups, bogus ration cards, mobiles and passports using fake identity to deflect detection after a crime, fake currency and anything; where profit exists are not surprises; perpetrators go scot free from ineffective policing and justice delivery system.
2. Corruption across levels in the government including the anti-corruption ombudsman, police, judiciary, commercial taxes and ULB engineering works; result in delays, poor quality / no delivery, inflated costs incurred from public funds. Tax collected from the public under various heads end up in bureaucrats’, politicians’ and contractors’ pockets
3. Whistle blowers who blow the whistle under whistle blower protection act, will be blown off and the culprit goes scot free

**Public Space Maintenance**

1. Poor hygiene in public space due to poor garbage and sewage management, deterrence against littering, lack of education and sense of aesthetics, hygiene and quality of life of citizens
2. Lack of discipline in public space (urinating, littering, motorists misusing pedestrian path, vendors vending on footpaths, unruly parking by the high and the mighty, traffic mismanagement, ill maintained narrow roads, poor road sense) is not something one is sensitive to
3. Low safety in public space: moving trains, buses, highways, parks, due to poor law and order management, no fear of the law and extraneous considerations in dealing with criminals

**Day To Day Living Experience**

1. Disconnect between what is said and what is meant! 24x7 customer care centre works only 5 days in a week (Monday to Friday) even in private sector
2. Emergency services telephones of Urban Local Bodies are kept off the hook
3. Sewerage manhole covers go missing, children fall in manholes and are carried away to rivers or the sea as dead body
4. Public buses do not stop in designated bus stops to avoid the crowd, only those who can run after the running bus manage to get in
5. Two wheelers ride on foot paths meant for pedestrians and pedestrians walk on the road endangering their lives and obstructing free flow of traffic
6. Foot over bridges are unused as they are not lit during night or entry is closed! People cross over medians causing accidents and obstructing vehicular movement
7. Poorly lit pedestrian underpasses are unused as they are used for hawking by street vendors, flooded during rains or infested by antisocial elements under the nose of the police
8. Vehicles carry heavy construction material protruding more than 10 feet beyond their length, not securely fastened; slip and land on vehicles following them during start, stop or moving up hill
9. Flyovers have traffic lights on them to divert traffic in different directions; they are no longer flyovers, but another road above a road carrying the name of a flyover
10. Throwing garbage in neighbours’ compound is the most convenient and economical way of disposal!
11. Roads are riddled with potholes, missing manholes, missing stones on footpaths, haphazard vehicle parking, foot path vendors obstructing road users, banners, beggars, and barricades without notice, posing danger to road users; no one held accountable
12. You buy a property that carries all civic approvals on paper, all taxes paid, believe that everything is in order; you get a demolition notice saying that the property has been constructed on a tank bed, is unapproved after 30 or even 50 years of your peaceful possession. The person / builder who sold the property with all papers and even the government officials who were responsible for approval and supervision of their jurisdiction, are not questioned as to how the illegality was approved or even went unnoticed, for decades, and how infrastructural services were provided for an illegal property? You are answerable for everything not the perpetrator
13. When you hire a taxi, the driver, after driving you for a km, will ask you for money to fill gas! He doesn’t think it is his responsibility to keep his car in drivable condition before you engage him
14. There are beggars who are really worth several millions! owning apartments, farm houses, luxury items. Begging is another profession!
15. When you get into a reserved railway coach you will encounter more than double the number of people that the coach is meant to accommodate. People will occupy your seats and will not move unless you use force or call the police
16. High value transactions carry two prices: one with bill and another without, the one without bill will be cheaper by about 20-30%. The difference is the share of the booty (tax) looted
17. Power utility will announce power cut for a specified duration but will actually cut off supply even before and after the announced duration, putting all your plans in disarray
18. Public toilets are made without adequate water supply or mechanism to flush and maintain hygiene Due to poor cleanliness inside the toilet, people use the open space around the toilet as a toilet!

**Education**

1. Unsafe schools due to corrupt education department supervisory officials looking the other way, when illegalities are noticed or brought to their notice. Lack of integrity, leads to poor quality of education, crowded and unsafe classrooms and school buses, unrecognised schools, accidents and safety issues for children. The only way to get them to act is create public awareness and mob fury through press; mobocracy alone works better than law enforcement
2. Children are taught to obey elders, not to ask questions, be humble and so on in schools, but not introduced to basics of civic sense, cleanliness, hygiene, traffic rules, safety, conduct in public space, ones’ rights and obligations, how to handle unsafe situations, where to report if you find something wrong happening, discipline, self-defence, compassion, sharing, mutual respect and self-esteem; the building blocks of a responsible state
3. Students are not allowed to question their teachers, but just to listen to them and repeat what they say
4. Students cannot use innovative methods to solve problems, but only the method taught by teachers in the classroom and then you expect them to innovate and be enterprising!
5. Teachers in MBA programs do not know how organisations work, have just come to teach what they have been taught, after their own graduation or under graduation decades ago
6. MBA teachers and students who are expected to write project reports as part of their course, are not aware of report writing and referencing standards / styles such as APA, Harvard, MLA / MS office templates, to make reports using IT productivity tools
7. Faculty who teach portfolio management hasn’t invested himself or know functioning of stock markets

**What Is Stated, Expected and Meant**

1. For real estate promoters and builders, every project of theirs is a luxury project, as it meets just *basic needs*. They don’t understand difference between what are minimum basic needs and what is considered as luxury. By calling a project *Luxury* it becomes *Luxury*! No one to regulate them on misleading claims and nomenclature
2. If you follow a google map for the shortest route to a destination you may hit a wall and never reach your destination
3. When you or someone get admitted in a hospital for critical illness / surgery, you have to keep one person exclusively by the side of the patient to run around, calling nurses or doctors whenever your ward / patient develops complications / becomes critical and you even have to carry the patient from one ward to another or the operation theatre, and prompt the doctor to act on the emergency. Then why you need hospitals?

**Bureaucracy**

1. Bureaucrats clamour for higher budgetary allocation and higher spending powers to serve their personal interests
2. Schools are sanctioned to be set up. The meaning of a *school* is a class-room which can accommodate 30 students. Attendant essentials such as qualified teachers in proportion to no. of classes / subjects and students, minimum needs such as toilets, drinking water, teaching aids and so on, are simply ignored. You have schools without blackboards, teaching aids, teachers, toilets, safe drinking water, benches / desks. What purpose is served by such schools other than creating expense bills? Sustainability and holistic approach should drive investments and not appeasing politics by distribution of poverty, without caring for its efficacy and meeting outcome objectives
3. A village is classified as electrified if a transformer is erected in the village vicinity, doesn’t matter if there is a transmission line to carry power to the transformer, if power is actually transmitted to the transformer and power is available at specified voltage at user end, if devices are energised …. An electrified village is a misnomer!
4. Subsidised / free electricity for agricultural pumping is used for industrial applications by the influential and powerful

**Accountability**

1. Murders / crimes happening right in front of police stations have no witnesses and hence not investigated or culprit brought to book!
2. If you sell a vehicle and the buyer commits a crime using your vehicle or your vehicle is spotted in the vicinity of the crime, the seller is answerable since buyer hasn’t changed the ownership in the govt. records and as per govt. records, the seller is still the owner and accountable for apparent use of his vehicle for crime
3. Civic agencies abetting accidents to public by negligence/violation of norms are not held accountable. The victim is left to suffer for himself. Government and its agencies are not accountable for anything, only to collect legal and illegal fees for any services
4. The largest tax defaulter roams around freely, is seen in high profile parties, keeps hopping airports, runs betting races and much more, but for the authorities he is untraceable and cannot catch him!
5. When there is an accident, might is right on the streets and police conveniently keep away till the problem is resolved, only to collect their share from both parties but not to apprehend the culprit
6. Elected representatives, their supporters and those claiming to be their henchmen, don’t have to follow any law of the land. They ransack toll booths when they are asked to pay toll like anyone else who uses toll roads. Government takes no action against the goons. They have their own law. Laws are applicable only for those who choose to obey them
7. Hospitals carry out diagnostic tests on a dead body only to inflate the bill from the patients’ caretakers. No questions asked
8. Anything that is not organic can be sold as organic, no regulation for (mis)use of popular terms amounting to misleading consumer
9. When there is an accident on the road, people tend to avoid helping the victim, as helping the injured may drag the person who offered help, to police stations and courts, and the onus is on him to prove that he is not the culprit!
10. Drivers keep talking on mobiles with impunity even when noticed by policemen, They have the audacity to throw the very low penalty of INR 100/- for the offence and continue to talking while driving endangering other road users lives
11. You can never be sure of what you got when you pay for goods or services. Agreements, promises, commitments carry different meaning in India for the same terminology, when compared to another country. Words and terms are used to send out a good feeling till the sale is over, not necessarily meaning what is meant
12. Those carrying professional certificates are not necessarily professionals in the field they are certified to be, since certificates can be bought and sold for a small price. You have to use word of mouth references or another independent assessment. Credibility of claims made is very low
13. Reported cases of emigration officials at airports tearing off pages in the passengers’ passport on the sly (if you are not alert) so that you could get caught while returning, for travelling without valid papers and for a fancy price to rescue you from the problem
14. Emission certificates are available without any emission test conducted on your vehicle and the agency that issued the certificate goes scot free. So is driving license, you can get a driving licence without presenting yourself in front of the transport authority even if you are underage or have handicaps endangering others’ lives if you drive. You can create predated documents for property transactions if you can throw the price for it
15. You can practise as a medical professional without going through a medical school, with fake certificates
16. Tax evaders in collusion with politicians and plundering the country <http://www.slideshare.net/whattrulyhappened/corruption-inindiapresentation-slides-v2>
17. Making mockery of democracy, when pre-election rivals becomes post-election bed fellows, through coalition formation to form government, to garner majority to rule. In this scenario, all political parties portray themselves as rivals to opposition parties; when in reality everyone is an opportunist, wouldn’t support citizen initiatives for change.

# Root causes for unease of living (Antecedents)

1. Our systems and practices. Fundamental to poor experience on ease of living as well as ease of doing business are our lack of dispassionate and honest recognition and definition of a problem, without (a) hidden agenda such as build-in rent seeking opportunities for policy makers, implementing executives, advocates for dispute resolution and escape routes for violators (b) parochialism in distribution of benefits, creating artificial impediments to benefit middlemen (agents of politicians) in the garb of enablers / facilitators (c) built in opacity leading to backroom deals for a price, to get work done, access to benefits and managing penalties for violations (c) obfuscation of the system, misleading / inconsistent laws that need to be worked around, to access services or redress grievances (d) creating opportunity for unofficial route suiting those in favour (e) short term approach designed around instantaneous gratification, temporal solution by containing / diverting an issue, obfuscation or extraneous considerations underlying bureaucratic decisions (f) hidden interest to encourage / provide escape route for violators by ill-conceived laws, lack of holistic approach, lose definition of rules and irrational considerations by obfuscation and cacophony, to dispense benefits to favoured ones (g) making grievance redressal convoluted, arbitrary, expensive and of unpredictable outcome with built in or interpreted elements of discretion, making a law without thinking about its implementability, including potential misuse. The end result is the victim suffering without recourse to redressal and violators continuing with their ways.
2. Practices driven by cultural baggage, narrow mind-sets, defensive approach, ignorance, low education, exposure and value systems, superstitions guiding actions
3. Over accommodative and non-assertive character of citizens, accepting anything, not claiming what is due, docile attitudes forgoing (trading) ones’ rights for emotional appeal, mental peace and instant gratification; tactics adopted by policy and decision makers, regulatory agencies, governmental machinery and politicians
4. Lack of bargaining power of masses due to dependency driven by disparity and feudal inheritance, divide and rule tactics adopted by governments to break citizen initiatives for uniting. Plural society and diversity of interests disrupting initiatives to unite.
5. Low need for achievement and initiatives demonstrated by citizens, and use of power by the powerful, politicians and bureaucracy to thwart any attempts to unite
6. Easy going culture of governments due to lack of assertive demand for accountability, action and outcome, preferring diffusing strife through temporal *instant gratification* tactics, to arrest vigorous action than an objective solution oriented approach
7. Lack of depth and incisiveness in understanding issues holistically for sustainable solutions, driven by incompetence and hidden agenda to safeguard own interests, for preserving and nurturing rent seeking opportunities in government
8. Evolution of a corrupt system offering *easy practical quick* solution to citizen problems
9. Pluralistic political system fighting against one another distracting attention from central issues
10. Laws are framed with little understanding of its ramifications in the near and long term / conflicts with other laws, if it preserves equity among affected people, scope for subversion / misuse, if it is for long term good or a knee jerk reaction to immediate developments or to temporarily pacify any stakeholder group, in sync with changing times, need for infrastructure / prerequisites to implement, budgetary support, lead time to put in place needed infrastructure. All these lead to dilution and ineffectiveness in implementation, not meeting the purpose for which it was meant, and finally repealing the law based on criticisms; citizens lose faith and system losing credibility. The cacophony generated creates rent seeking opportunities for intermediary players.
11. The most critical is citizen should respect the law which should enjoy credibility for it to be effective; which is the fundamental question. Laws are framed with interested end user in mind, as a conduit for decision makers / implementers to gain.
12. Half-baked regulations are announced for premature implementation for considerations less than professional
13. Laws are framed in convoluted language leaving scope for interpretation and escape routes, making its effectiveness skewed
14. Hiring progressive sounding phrases but not living up to it, short cut approach to problems, diversionary / delay tactics, depending on whipped up emotions than rationality, looking for alibi / mercenaries to take the crime on themselves / scapegoats for a small price, is the norm. Some companies employ people specifically for shouldering responsibility for misdeeds and the short stint in jail (which in their calculation works out cheaper than compliance, in the long run). Enforcement in any sphere and at any level is always a weak link that encourages illegal acts
15. The collective ecosystem is riddled with over (false) promise and under (no) perform playing on emotions and mob power
16. Most crimes are conveniently forgotten after the initial buzz and public fury, due to extraneous / political intervention, corruption; criminals continuing with their business right outside prison premises
17. Slow and convoluted judiciary never reaching a conclusion without lapse of several years after the crime; conclusions are never deterrent enough to dissuade further crime, leading to no fear of the law; a brazen courage that one can manage anything and get away, people losing faith in credibility of the justice delivery system, leading to serious law and order problems
18. Deliberate absence of tracking systems that will expose misdeeds and poor governance is orchestrated, the citizen suffers at every level not getting his money’s worth
19. Need of the hour is building in effective transparent workable systems to handle all potential misdeeds, misuse of the system and ensure effective functioning under objective supervision. Officials, legislatures and policy makers cannot be trusted to deliver services, in return for taxes paid by citizens
20. Over promise, false promise and under delivery or no delivery, unreliability, lack of consistency, lack of transparency and integrity mark the unease of living

# Consequences of Low Ease of Living

1. A situation where a child cannot trust its mother, citizen cannot trust its elected government and a victim cannot trust the police. Where we do go from here?
2. Low economic productivity of citizens and organisations, having to divert their energy to manage multitude of irritants, affecting day to day activities
3. Shifting priorities of policy makers and bureaucrats towards dysfunctional objectives, preoccupied with guarding themselves from exposure and handling corruption charges
4. Negative attitudes of citizens driving their acts, becoming self-centred, no long term vision, worried more about day to day maintenance, a general debilitating environment
5. Lower competitiveness at the national level, brain and capital drain to geographies with more hospitable conditions and ease of living
6. Inability to progress

International institutions should initiate studies on *Ease of Living* and promote sustainable action to achieve the same. Ease of doing business should be recognised as a consequential fall- out of correcting the fundamental problem of *Ease of Living*. Though *Ease of doing business* is relatively more controllable at the national level with lesser complexity and variation, ease of living needs an all-encompassing cleansing across levels: national, state, district and local, but a beginning has to be made irrespective of the immediate potential pains involved, if we are to move forward as a sustainable progressive society.

It is time governments and international agencies support initiatives for arriving at an Index of Liveability (Ease of Living) that helps one evaluate different geographies for its l*iveability quotient*. Such an effort will also help enhance competitiveness of emerging economies that will be more productive than giving aid under disparate heads.