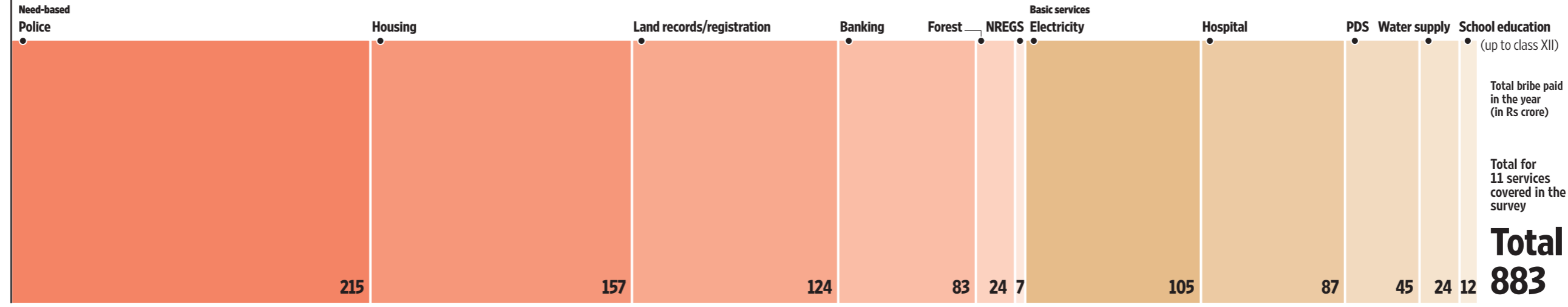




The government is budgeted to spend more than Rs1 trillion on poverty alleviation programmes, which is more than what the states and the Centre do in providing public services. For long, experts have been concerned that there are enormous leakages in these spending programmes and the benefits do not accrue to the poor. A survey, done jointly by Transparency International India and the Centre for Media Studies, shows that one in three people living below the poverty line (BPL) pay bribes to access these programmes. The findings of the nationwide survey have set the agenda. It is to be seen whether politicians and civil society will respond adequately to ensure that the growth process is indeed inclusive.

Estimate of bribe



Graphics: SANDEEP BHATNAGAR/MINT

The causes

The survey found that BPL households had to pay bribes for a host of reasons, including for a new ration card, getting registered for the NREGS programme, filing a police complaint, admission to a school, etc. All of these are their entitlements and not services that were to be offered at the discretion of the public service providers.

Major purposes for paying bribes

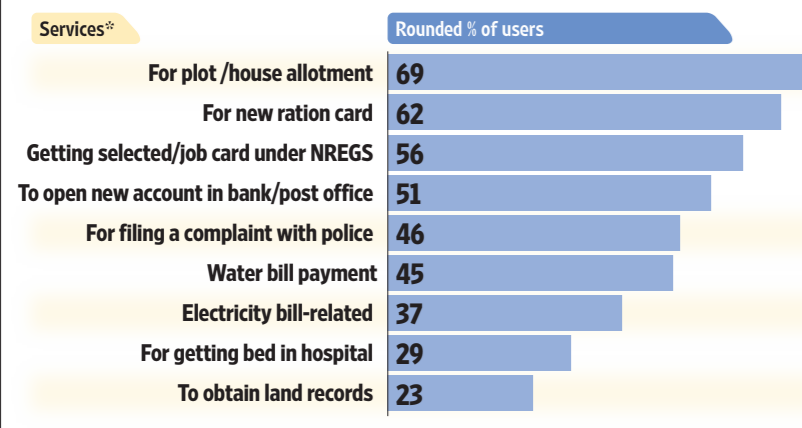
- Basic services**
 - PDS**: For new card, for monthly quota, change of address, change of shop, addition of names, licence to sell
 - Hospital**: For bed, outpatient and diagnostic services, medicine, childbirth-related services, surgery, medical certificate, blood
 - School education**: New admission, certificates, attendance/promotion, scholarship, hostel admission
 - Electricity**: New connection, meter installation/repair, bill-related issues, agriculture connection, better supply
 - Water supply**: Installation/maintenance of handpump, regularization of unauthorized connection, meter installation, repair of pipe, supply of irrigation water, supply of tanker water

Need-based services

- NREGS**: For registration/to get selected, issuance of job card, wage payment
- Land records/registration**: For income certificate, obtaining land record, sale/purchase deed, mutation, land survey, caste certificate, property tax
- Forest**: To pick fuel wood, for cutting trees, for saplings, to collect forest produce, forest land for farming and grazing
- Police**: For filing complaint and FIR, as an accused, removing name as witness, passport verification, verification for job, character certificate, violation of traffic laws
- Housing**: Allotment of plot/house, release of home loan, toilet construction, ownership transfer
- Banking**: To take loan, open new account, pension-related issues, deferment of loan instalment

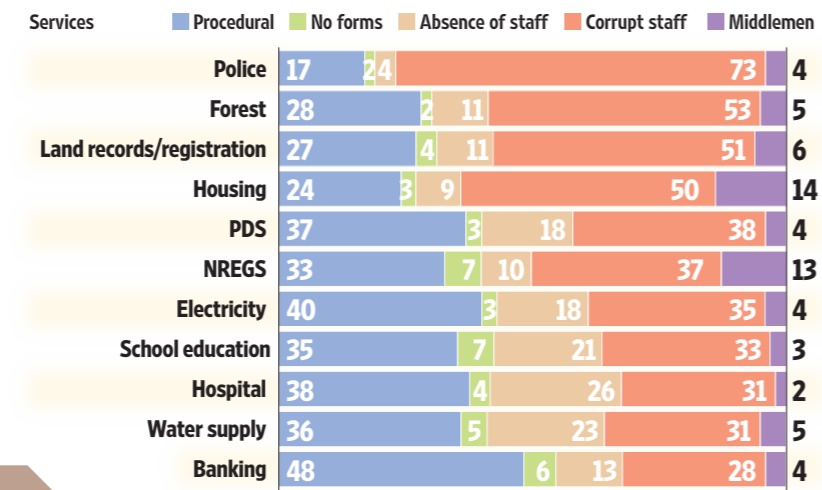
NREGS: National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

Specific services requiring repeat visits



*Some services requiring three or more visits

Factors faced in availing public services (in %)



How they stacked up

The survey found that no state government in the country could claim "zero corruption". The worst ranked states are Assam, Nagaland, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, governed by a mix of national and regional political parties. All of this suggests that most political parties are equally culpable.

Levels of overall corruption in states (involving BPL)



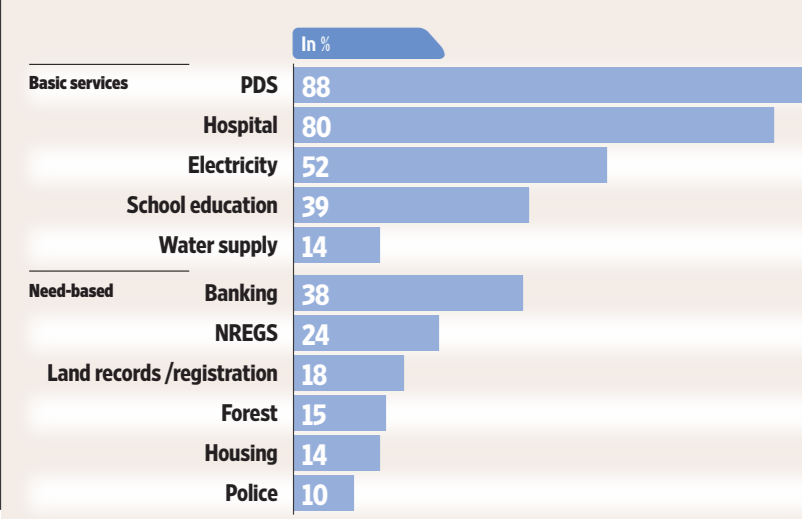
Most corrupt services

- | Services | Rank |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Police | 1 |
| Land records/registration | 2 |
| Housing | 3 |
| Water supply | 4 |
| NREGS | 5 |
| Forest | 6 |
| Electricity | 7 |
| Health | 8 |
| PDS | 9 |
| Banking | 10 |
| School education (up to class XII) | 11 |

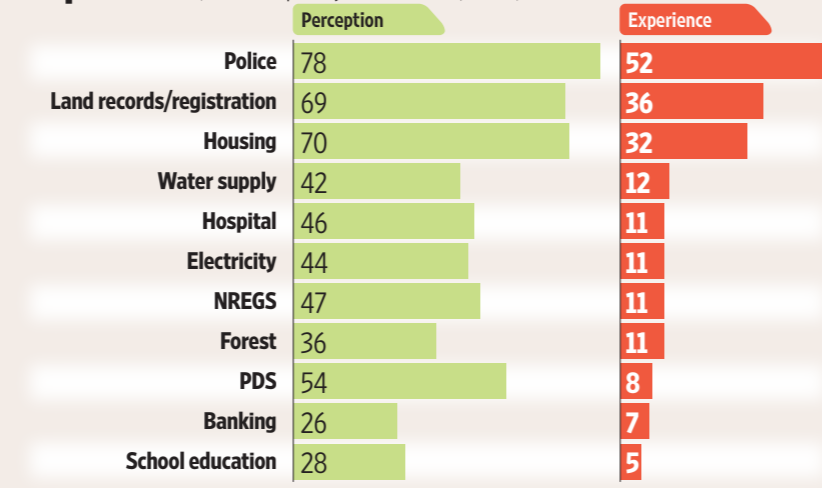
Perception vs experience

The survey has found that BPL households have no alternative but to access public services. Not only does this leave them vulnerable, the payment of bribes leaves them much more poorer as well.

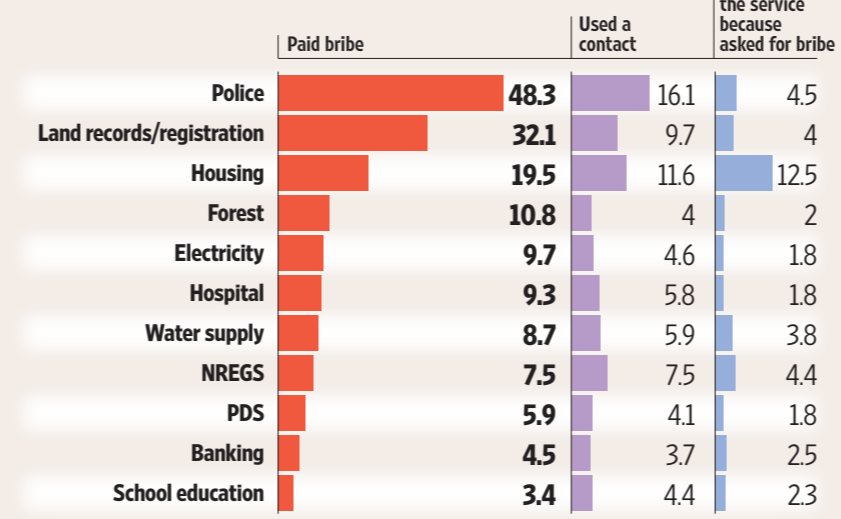
Use of services by BPL households



Perception about corruption is much higher than actual experience



Experience of corruption (in %)



Recipients of bribes (in %)

