

# The Deokaran Test: The Price of Integrity without Protection

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10th Edition Research Seminar on Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and African Union (AU) Agenda 2063

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Dr Ramona Baijnath  
Industrial Sociologist

# Africa: Corruption (CPI) vs Inequality (Gini) – Correlation Snapshot






Higher corruption is associated with higher inequality across Africa, as weak governance concentrates wealth, reduces public investment, and limits redistributive capacity

**Most → Least Corrupt in Africa**

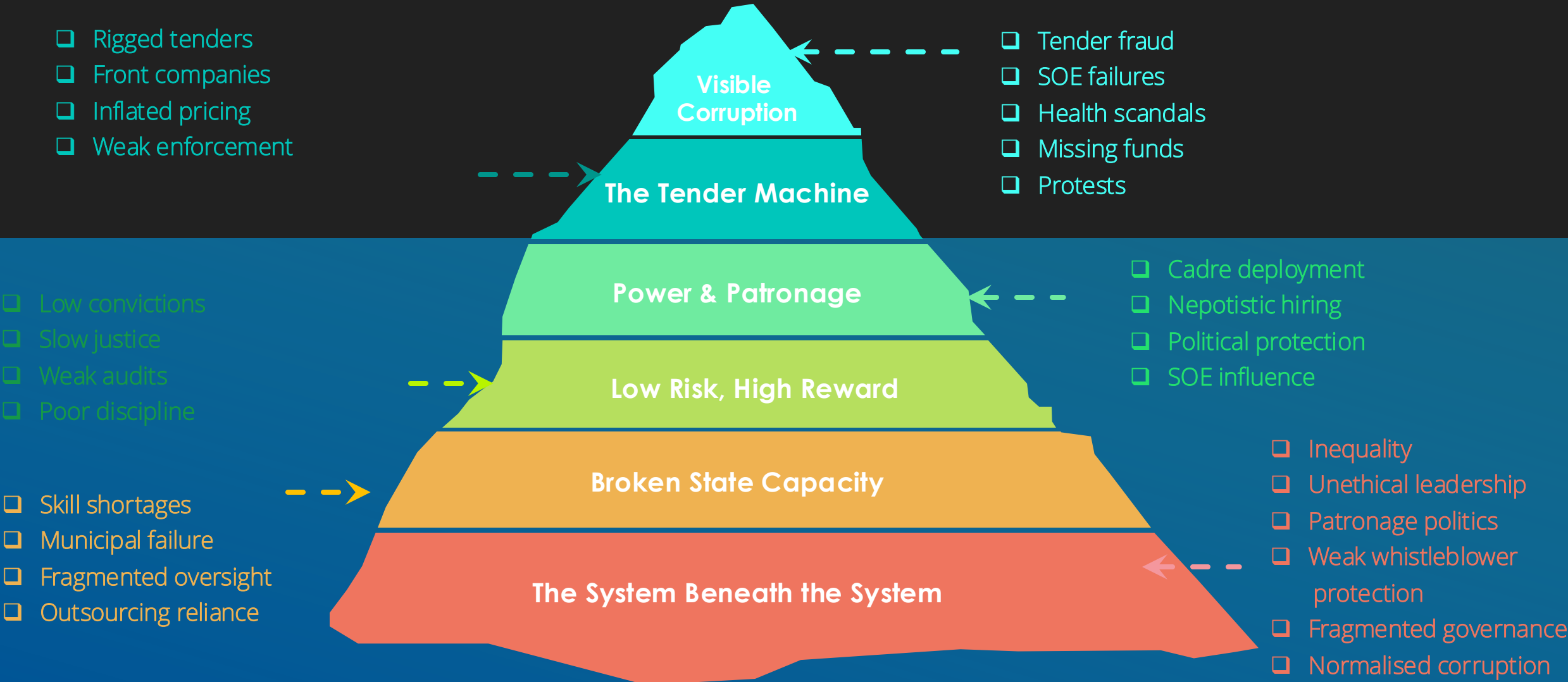
Based on Transparency International CPI 2025 trends

Lower score = higher perceived corruption

Latest World Bank Gini Coefficients

CPI Tier	Countries	CPI Level	Gini Coefficient	Interpretation
 Very High Corruption	Somalia, DRC, South Sudan, Burundi	~11–22	~44–65 (very high/est. high inequality)	Extreme corruption → weak state capacity → entrenched inequality
 High Corruption	Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola, Cameroon	~23–33	~35–57	High corruption sustains elite capture and uneven resource distribution
 Moderate Corruption	Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, South Africa	~31–46	~37–63	Mixed governance: partial redistribution but persistent inequality
 Low Corruption	Namibia, Botswana, Rwanda	~49–63	~43–59	Stronger governance reduces extreme inequality but structural gaps remain
 Very Low Corruption	Mauritius, Seychelles	~65–75	~32–37	Strong institutions → more equitable distribution and lower inequality

# What's Going On? Why Corruption in the Public Sector Thrives



# African Governance & Corruption Scandals Affecting Water, Health & Sanitation Systems (WASH) aiding **Water Bankruptcy**

Country / Case	Scandal	Reported Value Lost	Key Named Stakeholders	Direct Impact on Water & Sanitation Services
<b>Nigeria – Rural Water Supply &amp; Sanitation fraud</b>	Diversion of rural WASH programme funds	Hundreds of millions \$	Goodluck Jonathan (presidential era governance context), Hadiza Bala Usman (public accountability advocate), state water agency officials	Abandoned boreholes, broken hand pumps, rural reliance on unsafe water sources
<b>Kenya – Constituency Development Fund (CDF) water projects</b>	Ghost water projects and inflated contracts	Millions \$	Raila Odinga (political system oversight era), William Ruto (devolution-era governance), MPs managing CDF allocations, local county executives	Non-existent boreholes, incomplete sanitation blocks, stalled rural water expansion
<b>Uganda – NWSC procurement irregularities</b>	Overpricing and procurement abuse in water infrastructure	Hundreds of millions \$	Patrick Luutu (NWSC audit officials), Eugene Okol (TI Uganda governance analysis), NWSC senior management teams	Delayed expansion of Kampala water network and sewerage coverage
<b>Mozambique – Hidden debts crisis affecting WASH sector</b>	Corrupt state-backed loans and mismanagement of public finances	~\$2 billion hidden debt scandal	Filipe Nyusi (President), Manuel Chang (former Finance Minister, extradited), Credit Suisse executives (loan structuring), Antonio Carlos do Rosário (security-linked SOE official)	Severe cuts to urban water rehabilitation and sanitation infrastructure (Maputo, Beira)
<b>Tanzania – Rural water contractor fraud</b>	Collusion and substandard rural water infrastructure delivery	Millions \$	John Magufuli (infrastructure oversight era), district water engineers, contracted firms under local councils	Broken rural water schemes, unsafe reliance on rivers and shallow wells
<b>Zambia – Lusaka water &amp; sanitation procurement issues</b>	Inflated procurement and irregular contracting in WASH projects	Tens of millions \$	Edgar Lungu (presidential era governance), Lusaka Water Supply & Sanitation Company leadership, Ministry of Water Development officials	Delayed sewerage expansion in peri-urban settlements; limited safe water access

# Impact of Corruption on WASH Systems



Corruption in WASH systems is a **systemic barrier to development**, draining resources and weakening capacity needed for **safe water, sanitation, public health, and water security across Africa.**

## **Weakens health, cities & governance (SDGs 3, 11 & 16)**

It drives system failures and disease outbreaks while eroding trust in institutions and weakening urban service delivery.



**Undermines universal access (SDG 6)** Corruption diverts and inflates WASH funding, resulting in failed infrastructure and continued reliance on unsafe water sources.

## **Reduces infrastructure effectiveness (AU Agenda 2063)**

It wastes limited public and donor funds, delivering fewer functional water systems and stagnates infrastructure development across Africa.

# How Corruption Drives **Water Bankruptcy**?

1

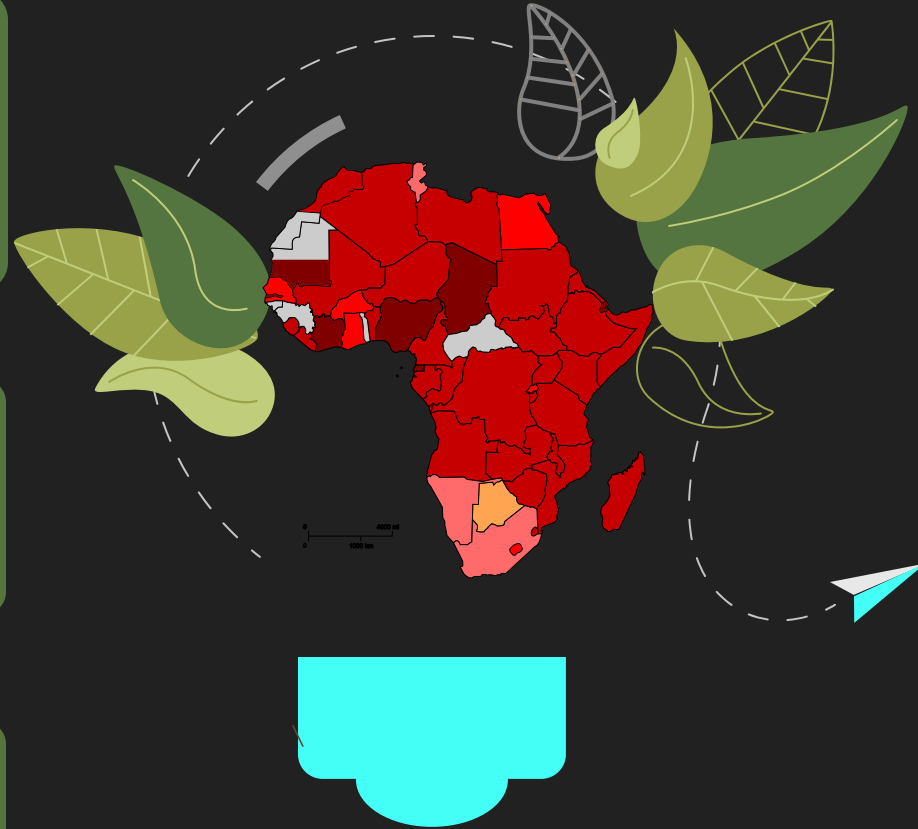
Corruption-induced **water bankruptcy** is a governance failure where systems can no longer effectively manage or deliver water

2

**Financial Drain:** Funds for water infrastructure are stolen, inflated or diverted

3

**Infrastructure Failure:** Projects are abandoned, poorly built or never maintained



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**Institutional Breakdown:** Weak accountability allows repeated procurement fraud

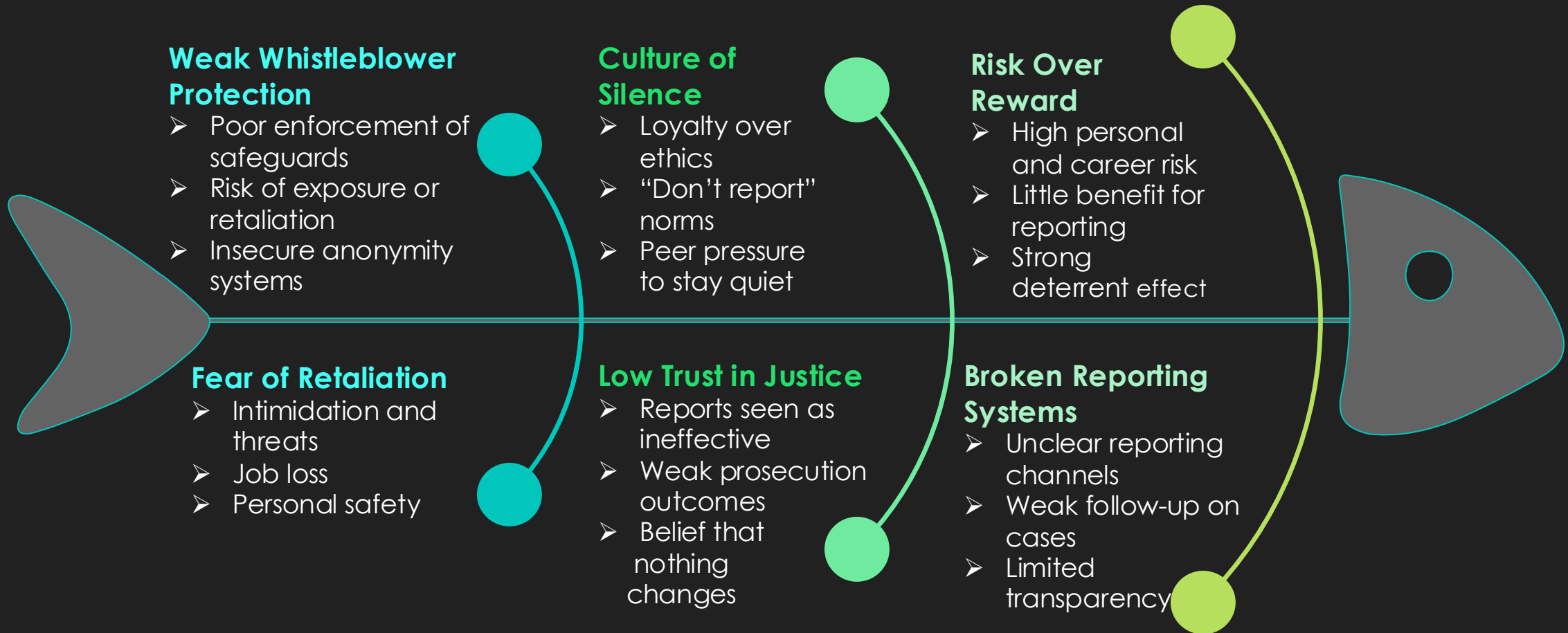
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**Service collapse:** Water systems become unreliable or non-functional

6

**Chronic scarcity:** Even available water cannot be delivered safely or equitably

# Why are Public Servants Silent?



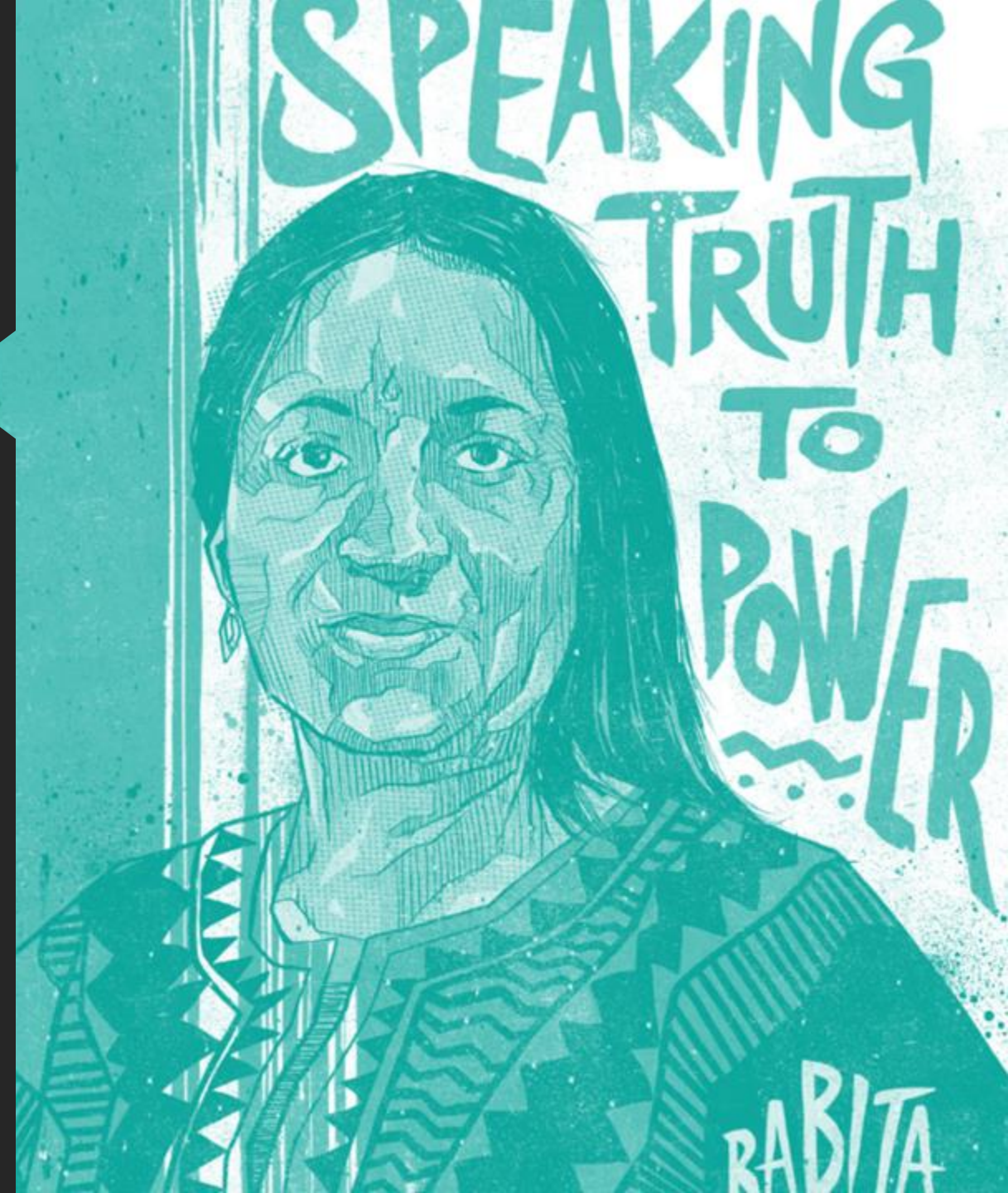
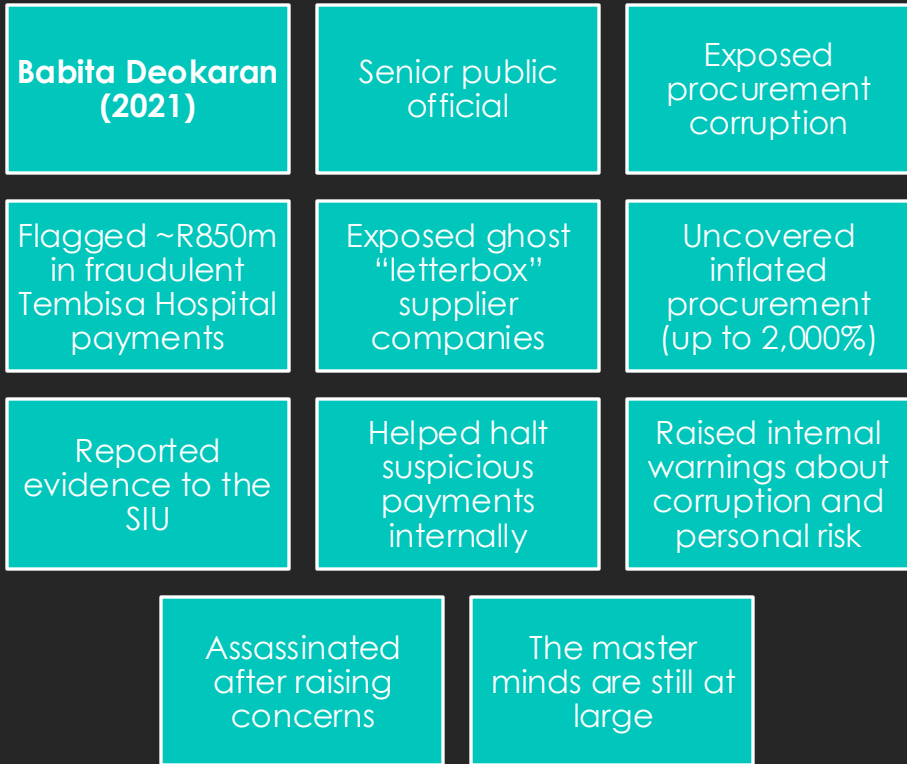
# Top 6 ZA South African Corruption & Governance Scandals

Type	Scandal	Period	Est. Value (ZAR)	What Happened	Perpetrators / Links	Whistleblowers / Key Witnesses	Investigation / Commission
Procurement Corruption	National Lotteries Commission Looting	2020–2026	~R1.4bn	Funds diverted from community projects to private luxury assets	NLC officials; connected beneficiaries	Raymond Joseph	Special Investigating Unit
Procurement Corruption / Health Sector Fraud	Tembisa Hospital Fraud	2021–2025	~R2bn	Ghost suppliers and inflated medical tenders	Health officials; procurement networks	Babita Deokaran	SIU
Procurement Corruption (COVID Emergency Spending)	COVID-19 PPE / Digital Vibes	2020–2021	~R150–R500m+	Irregular COVID-19 contracts to politically connected individuals	Health Department-linked associates	Pieter-Louis Myburgh	SIU; Madlanga Commission
State Capture / Systemic Corruption	State Capture (Gupta/Zuma Era)	2010s	~R500bn+ (economic impact est.)	Capture of SOEs, cabinet influence, and state contracts	Jacob Zuma; Gupta family	Thuli Madonsela; Mcebisi Jonas	Zondo Commission
Banking / Municipal Finance Fraud	VBS Mutual Bank Collapse	2018	~R2bn	Municipal deposits looted, bank collapsed	Bank executives; municipal officials	Terry Motua	South African Reserve Bank
State-Owned Enterprise Mismanagement / Procurement Failure	PRASA "Tall Trains"	2012–2015	~R2.6bn	Purchased locomotives unsuitable for SA rail network	PRASA executives; contractors	Popo Molefe	Public Protector; SIU

# Whistleblower Protection: The Frameworks Exist - **But Does the System Act?**

Category	Framework / Institution	Role in Whistleblower Protection
Law	<b>Protected Disclosures Act (2000)</b>	Protects public servants from retaliation
Law	<b>Prevention &amp; Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (2004)</b>	Requires reporting of serious corruption
Policy	<b>DPSA: Integrity, ethics, anti-fraud systems, and conduct standards for public servants</b>	Sets behavioural standards and supports reporting of wrongdoing
Oversight	<b>Public Service Commission of South Africa</b>	Monitors ethics and public administration
Oversight	<b>Public Protector South Africa</b>	Investigates maladministration and abuse of power
Oversight	<b>Special Investigating Unit</b>	Investigates corruption and fraud
Audit	<b>Auditor-General of South Africa</b>	Flags financial irregularities
Regional (AU)	<b>African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)</b>	Assesses governance, transparency, and accountability
Global (OGP)	<b>Open Government Partnership (OGP)</b>	Promotes transparency, open data, citizen participation, and anti-corruption reforms
Protection	<b>Witness Protection Act (1998)</b>	Provides relocation and security protection
Global / Continental	<b>UN SDG 16 / AU Agenda 2063</b>	Promotes transparency, strong institutions, and anti-corruption norms
Reality Gap	System constraints	<b>SA has a multi-layered whistleblower protection system across law, DPSA policy, AU and UN frameworks, but enforcement gaps limit real-world effectiveness.</b>

# CASE: The Cost of Institution Failure



# Reactions to the Assassination

Leader / Body	Direct Quote	Tone	Key Actions / Commitments
<b>President, Cyril Ramaphosa</b>	"The murder of Ms Babita Deokaran is a tragedy..." / "Whistleblowers should be saluted..." / "We must ensure they are not victimised."	Reform-oriented, protective	Strengthen whistleblower protection; improve coordination between anti-corruption bodies; review frameworks
<b>Minister of Justice, Ronald Lamola</b>	"Witness protection is essential for successful prosecutions." / "Witnesses must be protected where threats to life exist."	Institutional, security-focused	Strengthen Witness Protection Programme and coordination with prosecutors
<b>Gauteng Premier, Panyaza Lesufi</b>	"We will not tolerate corruption..." / "We must close loopholes enabling corruption."	Assertive, corrective	Strengthen provincial anti-corruption systems; support SIU investigations; tighten procurement controls
<b>PSA</b>	"We are deeply disturbed by the assassination of a whistleblower in the public service."	Concerned, protective	Call for strengthened whistleblower protection and workplace safety
<b>NEHAWU</b>	"The killing of Babita Deokaran highlights the urgent need to root out corruption in the public health sector."	Anti-corruption focused	Demand accountability in health procurement systems
<b>DA</b>	"Babita Deokaran was killed for blowing the whistle on corruption..." / "A state that fails to protect those who expose corruption."	Accountability-driven, critical	Call for independent investigation and stronger whistleblower protection
<b>EFF</b>	"The killing of Babita Deokaran is evidence of a corrupt system that eliminates those who expose it." / "Arrests must be made without delay."	Confrontational, systemic critique	Demand arrests, prosecutions, and accountability for implicated officials

# Protected Disclosures Bill – April 2026

Theme	Key Point	Implication
<b>Purpose</b>	If adopted into law	Will form the core framework for whistleblower protection
<b>Disclosure Standard</b>	No good faith required	Focus on wrongdoing, not motive
<b>Protection Scope</b>	Includes family/associates	Addresses indirect retaliation
<b>Physical Safety</b>	Early witness protection access	Faster protection in high-risk cases
<b>Legal Barriers</b>	NDA's cannot prevent disclosures	Public interest overrides contracts
<b>Incentives</b>	Conditional reward system	Encourages reporting, limits abuse
<b>Speed of Protection</b>	Delays in remedies	Protection may come too late
<b>Interim Support</b>	Lacks urgent safeguards	Need for faster, predictable protection
<b>Complaints Process</b>	Retired judge oversight	Advisory; legal action still required
<b>Efficiency</b>	Risk of added bureaucracy	May increase steps without improving access
<b>Reporting System</b>	Better timelines & safeguards	Improved feedback and identity protection
<b>Data Handling</b>	Anonymous central database	Focus on wrongdoing over identity
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Unclear accountability	May weaken trust in system
<b>Severe Risks</b>	No fatality provisions	Gap in extreme retaliation cases
<b>Support Measures</b>	Limited beyond legal aid	Insufficient financial/social support
<b>Overall Impact</b>	Depends on implementation	Speed, access and trust are critical
<b>Next Steps</b>	Stakeholder input encouraged	Further refinement still possible

# Government Response: The system responded after the failure not before it!

- 1** Recognition “Hero”
- 2** Reactive enforcement  
(arrests, SIU investigations)
- 3** Slow reform



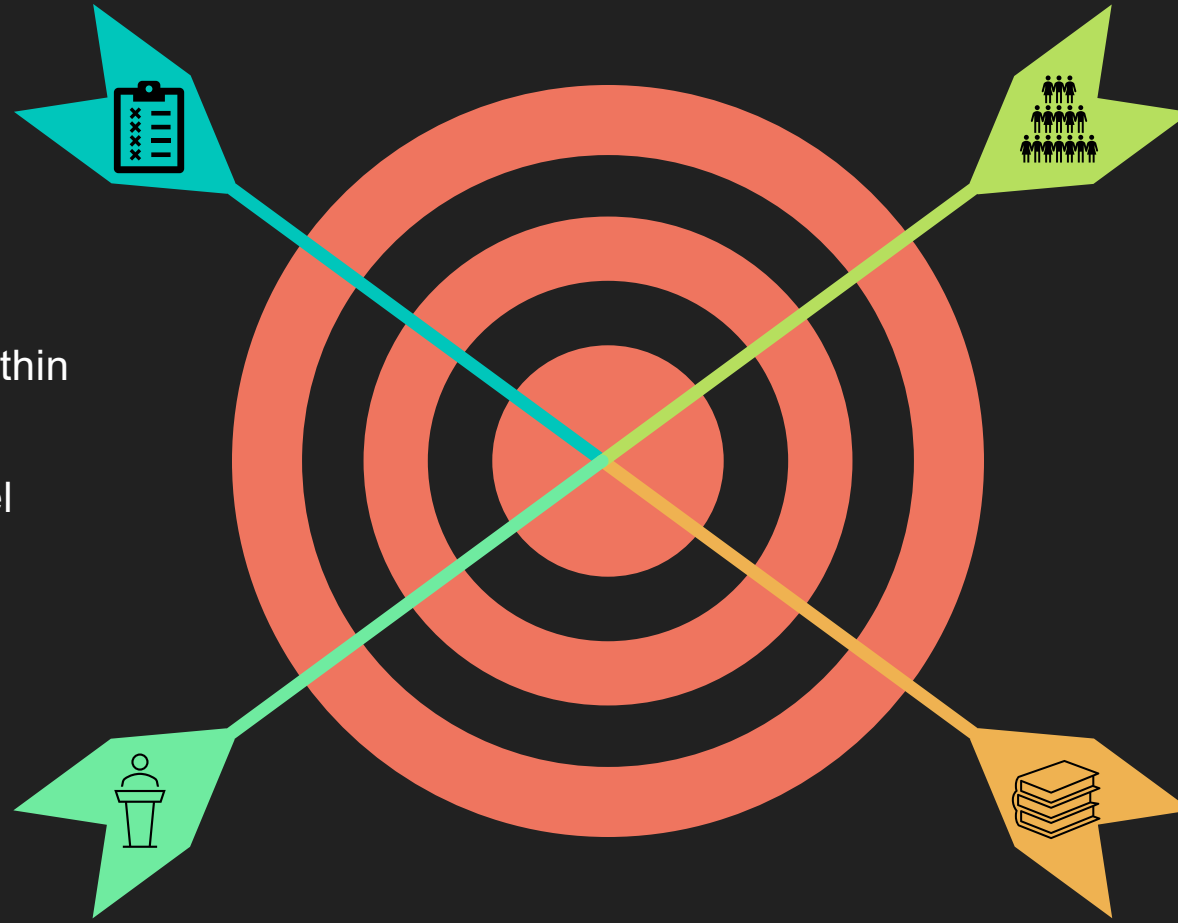
# Policy – Practice: Gap Analysis

## Localisation of Governance Failure

- Limited consequence management
- Corruption occurred at operational level
- Protection failure occurred within institutions
- Impact felt at community level

## Ethical Leadership

- No decisive intervention
- No protective action
- No urgency
- No accountability



## Collaborative Governance

- Poor inter-institutional coordination
- Poor shared accountability
- Risks not escalated
- Protocols not enforced
- Protection was triggered automatically

## Protection Frameworks

- Weak whistleblower protection systems
- No protection provided
- Warnings not acted on
- Lack of urgency in enforcement
- Delayed justice

# Institutional Failure: Lessons Learned

## Imbalance

This is a capability imbalance = reaction over prevention

## Implementation

These are not policy gaps they are implementation failures

## Behavioural Malfunction

The system did not fail technically it failed behaviourally



## Gaps

This case forces us to confront the gap between policy and protection

## Inertia

The frameworks existed but the system did not act

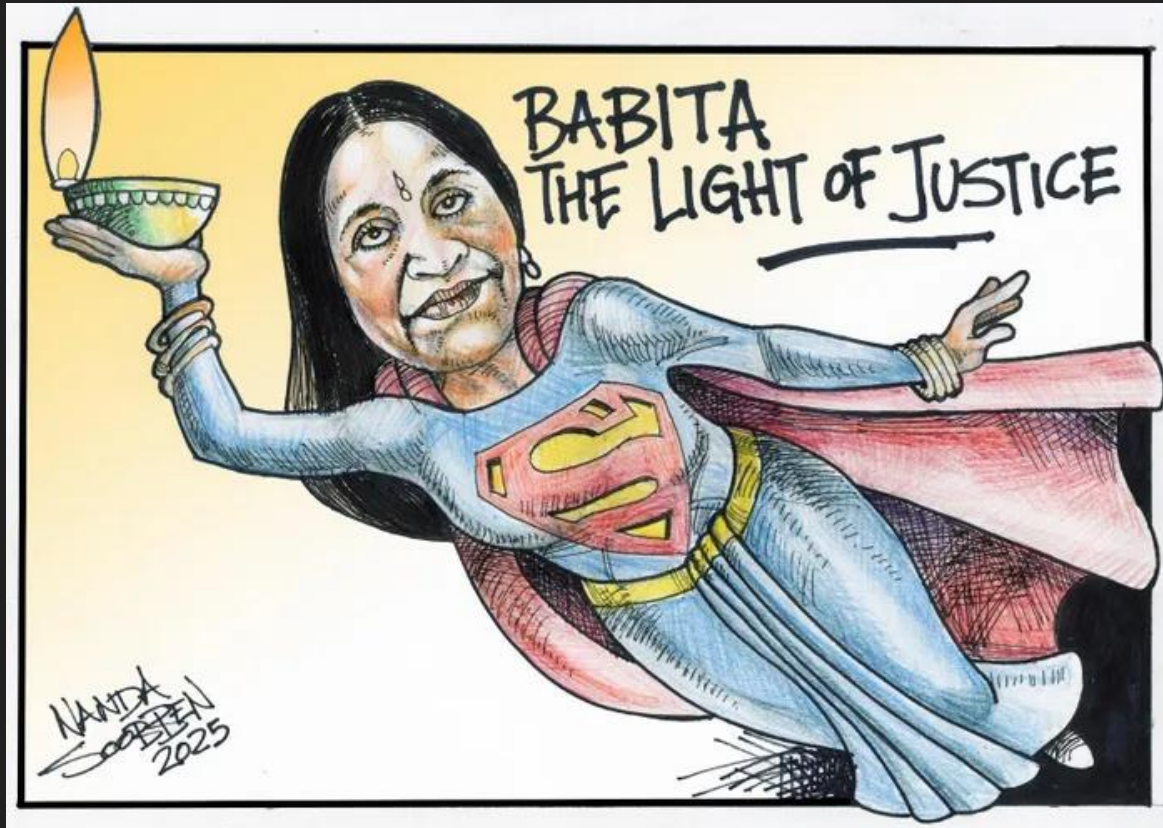
## Unmitigated Risk

The risk was visible but not acted upon.”

## Reactionary

The system responded after the failure not before it

# Human Cost of Weak Institutions: Institutional Failure is not Abstract it is Human



Loss of life



Loss of trust



Reinforcement of fear  
within the Public Service

# Putting the Pieces Together

## Fear of Retaliation

- ❑ What Public Servants see: silence, hesitation, lack of reporting
- ❑ Threats and intimidation
- ❑ Career risk (suspension, isolation)
- ❑ No safe reporting channels
- ❑ Whistleblowers punished, not protected

## Weak Professionalisation

- ❑ Non-merit appointments
- ❑ Weak ethics enforcement
- ❑ Poor control systems
- ❑ Blurred political-admin lines



## Institutional Distrust

- ❑ No faith in protection systems
- ❑ Reports ignored or buried
- ❑ Politicised outcomes
- ❑ Little transparency, slow accountability

## Leadership Inconsistency

- ❑ Selective accountability
- ❑ Warnings ignored
- ❑ Ethics vs loyalty conflict
- ❑ Reactive, not preventive

# Public Sector **Listening** Framework

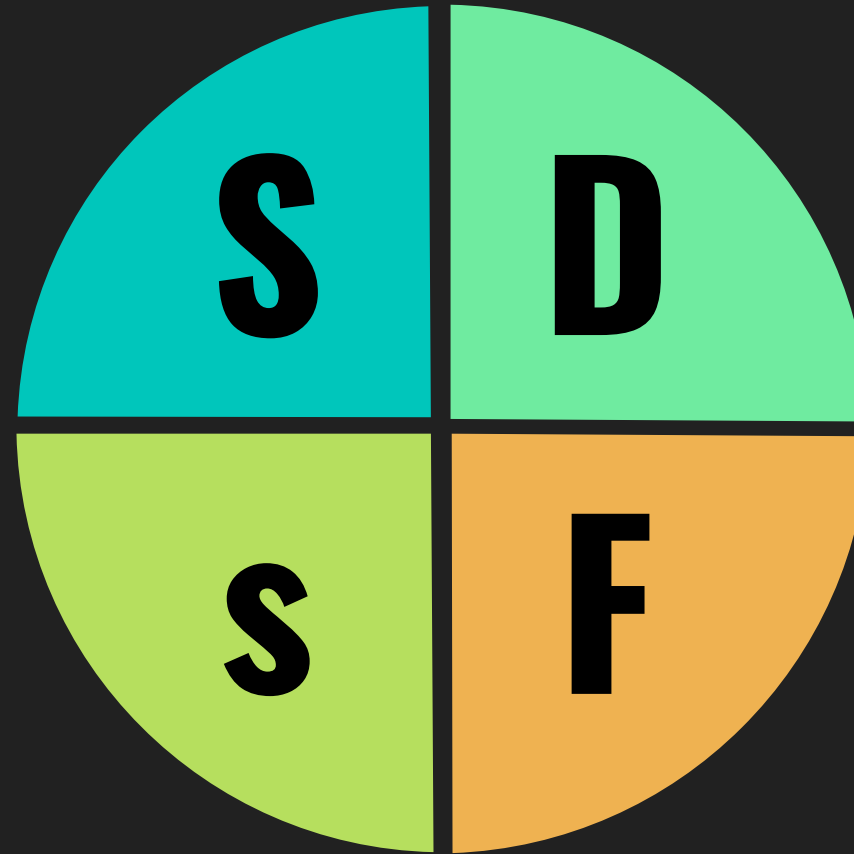
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## **SAY: Structured Voice**

- ❑ What people report in formal systems
- ❑ Staff surveys and pulse checks
- ❑ Exit interviews
- ❑ Suggestion / feedback systems
- ❑ Union engagements

## **SIGNAL: System Evidence**

- ❑ What the institution reveals indirectly
- ❑ HR grievances and complaints
- ❑ Audit and compliance findings
- ❑ Procurement red flags
- ❑ Reporting activity (or silence)



## **DO: Behavioural Signals**

- ❑ What people reveal through actions
- ❑ Turnover (especially skilled staff exits)
- ❑ Absenteeism and burnout trends
- ❑ Promotion acceptance/refusal patterns
- ❑ Compliance vs passive resistance

## **FEEEL: Trust & Perception**

- ❑ What shapes willingness to speak
- ❑ Fear of retaliation
- ❑ Belief in fairness and protection
- ❑ Trust in leadership consistency
- ❑ Sense of psychological safety

# What the Deokaran Test Teaches Government Reform

Every failure in this case maps directly to a reform gap: **Protection** failed, **Enforcement** lagged and **Integrity** was not rewarded

## Failure

## Reform



### **PROTECT: Make speaking up safe**

Goal: Remove fear as a barrier to integrity  
Outcome: Speaking truth becomes safe, not risky

- ❑ Strong whistleblower protection with real enforcement
- ❑ Anonymous, secure reporting channels
- ❑ Rapid response to threats or retaliation Independent protection authority
- ❑ Legal and psychological support for whistleblowers.



### **ENFORCE: Make accountability unavoidable**

Goal: Ensure rules apply consistently  
Outcome: Integrity becomes predictable, not selective

- ❑ Standardised disciplinary systems across government
- ❑ Mandatory action timelines for corruption alerts
- ❑ Equal consequences regardless of rank or influence
- ❑ Transparent publication of disciplinary outcomes
- ❑ Oversight bodies with real investigative power



### **REWARD: Make ethics worth it**

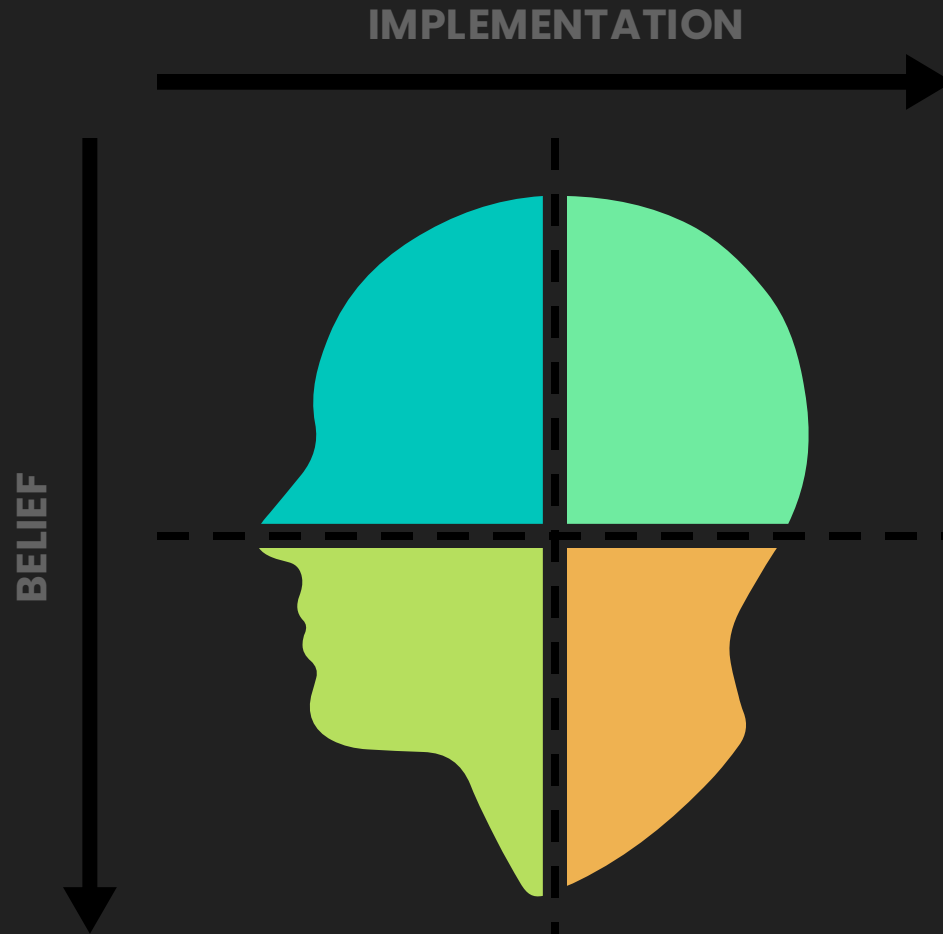
Goal: Incentivise people who care  
Outcome: Doing the right thing advances your career

- ❑ Integrity included in performance evaluations
- ❑ Promotion pathways for compliance & oversight roles
- ❑ Recognition for prevention, not only enforcement
- ❑ Rewards for early risk reporting and intervention
- ❑ Career protection for ethical dissent



# Closing the **Gap** Between Systems and Action

The real question is not whether systems exist...  
It is whether people believe in them enough to act.



Across Africa, we do not lack vision. We do not lack policy. We do not lack frameworks. What we lack is consistent, ethical implementation.

# Thank You

## Let's Connect

Dr Ramona Baijnath

**Email:**

Ramona\_Baijnath@Yahoo.Com

