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Ashish Sinha | New Delhi, December 22, 2010 | Updated 08:32 IST

HOW MP COFFERS SWELLED IN 5 YRS

Rs 2.75 cr (in 2004) Rs 2.88 cr (in 2009) 3,82.5% rise	Rs 3.08 cr (in 2004) Rs 4.81 cr (in 2009) 56.8% rise	Rs 4.88 cr (in 2004) Rs 28.81 cr (in 2009) 490.3% rise	Rs 4.88 cr (in 2004) Rs 28.81 cr (in 2009) 490.3% rise
Rs 21.25 cr (in 2004) Rs 4.4 cr (in 2009) 205.2% rise	Rs 2.28 cr (in 2004) Rs 17.6 cr (in 2009) 767.6% rise	Rs 6.32 cr (in 2004) Rs 17.6 cr (in 2009) 278.5% rise	Rs 2.28 cr (in 2004) Rs 17.6 cr (in 2009) 767.6% rise

HOW MP COFFERS SWELLED IN 5 YRS

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Even as the average Indian continues to slog it out in the big bad world, the fortunes of many of the MPs he has elected have seen an exponential growth in the five years from 2004 to 2009.

Leaving the aam aadmi way behind, the assets of a Congress Lok Sabha

member, for instance, rose by a stupendous 3,024 per cent during the period to reach Rs 289 crore from the earlier Rs 9.25 crore.

This record was created by 46-year-old Vijayawada parliamentarian Lagadapati Rajagopal, an industrialist who calls himself a "political and social worker". The Citizens' Report on Governance and Development 2010, released by the National Social Watch on Tuesday, also shows that 25 per cent of the Lok Sabha members (128 of the 543) come from categories such as industrialist, trader, businessman and builder.

This is a clear departure from the past when lawyers and agriculturists used to dominate the two Houses with the right mix of educationists, artists, intellectuals, industry leaders, sportspersons and social workers.

"It was rarely that one found industrialists, businessmen or others from allied communities in the Lok Sabha right until the 1990s. This is also reflected in the astonishing growth of crorepatitis in both Houses of Parliament," the report says.

The picture falls in place because the national per capita income grew by 10.5 per cent to Rs 44,345 in 2009-10 against Rs 40,141 in the year ago. The per capita income, however, grew by 5.6 per cent if calculated on the basis of 2004- 05 prices, a better way of comparison that broadly factors inflation.

The report says an analysis of the background of MPs clearly indicates a very high potential for "conflict of interest" and the recent media reports, which focused on the Rajya Sabha bigwigs, was only the "tip of the iceberg". The report also shows that many MPs do not mention in their bio-data whether they fall in categories such as industrialist, trader, businessman and builder and this made it "virtually impossible" to understand the specific business interests of the members.

The big leapers include BJP's Maneka Gandhi whose assets rose from Rs 6.32 crore in 2004 to reach Rs 17.6 crore in 2009 and her party's Uday Singh, who comes from Bihar. Singh's assets went up from Rs 2.06 crore to Rs 42.86 crore during the same period

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grim picture of what lies ahead.

"The proportion of the very rich in Parliament will keep rising in the days to come. The main reason is that contesting an election has become very costly now," Reddy said.

The minister said that richer politicians dominate most of south India, except Kerala, and much more money is spent during elections in these states.

"When rich people enter Parliament, can you minimise conflict of interests? They (MPs) should declare their interests at the outset but they don't," he added.

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