

Director of inquiry for Lokpal

July 22, 2021

In news- According to an RTI, it has been found that the Centre is yet to appoint a director of inquiry for conducting preliminary inquiry into graft complaints sent by the anti-corruption ombudsman.

About Director of Inquiry-

- According to the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, there shall be a director of inquiry, not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India.
- He/she shall be appointed by the Central government for conducting preliminary inquiries referred to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) by the Lokpal.
- Though the Director of Inquiry has not been appointed by Govt. of India, cases are being received in the commission for conducting preliminary inquiries.
- As per the provisions contained under Section 20 (1) (b) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, complaints in respect of public servants belonging to groups A, B, C or D are referred by the Lokpal to the CVC for a preliminary inquiry.

A brief note on Lokpal & Lokayuktas-

- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act was passed in 2013 with amendments in parliament.
- The first Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) recommended the enacting of the Office of a Lokpal and Lokayuktas.
- The **term "Lokpal" was coined by Dr. L.M.Singhvi in 1963.**
- The concept of a constitutional ombudsman was first proposed in parliament by Law Minister

Ashoke Kumar Sen in the early 1960s.

- The Lokpal is **responsible for enquiring into corruption charges** at the national level while the Lokayukta performs the same function at the state level.
- **India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.**
- The commitment of the Government to provide clean and responsive governance is reflected in passing of the legislation and creation of the body of Lokpal, to contain and punish acts of corruption.
- The Lokpal consists of a **Chairperson and eight members**. Four of the judicial members have been former Chief Justices of different High Courts and the four non-judicial members have been from All India Services/Central Services.
- **First Chairperson of the Lokpal is Shri Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose**, who is a former Judge of Supreme Court of India.
- Lokpal will have **power of superintendence and direction over any central investigation agency including CBI** for cases referred to them by the Lokpal.
- The Lokpal has **jurisdiction** to inquire into allegations of corruption against anyone who is or has been **Prime Minister, or a Minister in the Union government, or a Member of Parliament, as well as officials of the Union Government under Groups A, B, C and D.**
- Also covered are chairpersons, members, officers and directors of any board, corporation, society, trust or autonomous body either established by an Act of Parliament or wholly or partly funded by the Union or State government.
- It also covers any society or trust or body that receives foreign contributions above ₹10 lakh (as of

2019).