

## **Hon'ble Chief Justice Exhorts Central Vigilance Commission to Work More Vigorously for Safeguarding the Trust of the People**

Two day National seminar organized by the Central Vigilance Commission to commemorate its Golden Jubilee concluded here today. Speaking at the Valedictory Function of the seminar Chief Guest, Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Justice P. Sathasivam, said that "Corruption is the biggest threat to democracy. In a healthy democracy, institutions must be independent and strong that help facilitate good governance, accountability and transparency. However, six decades of independence in our country have witnessed a steep rise in the magnitude and complexity of corruption in public life. Values in public life and perspective of those values have undergone tremendous change. It seems that the consequences of corruption are well known, perhaps not well realized. It's because either we have given up hope of making our country a less corrupt or we have come to terms with corruption, accepting it as a facet of life. Both these attitudes are hazardous for working of democracy."

Hon'ble Chief Justice also added that "India, in the recent past, has been more vocal than ever before in denouncing the act of corruption. The Central Vigilance Commission must work more vigorously for safeguarding the trust of the people. Nevertheless, the problem of corruption is pervasive and the reach of vigilance institution is limited. While anti-corruption agencies are striving to address the widespread problem of corruption, their task cannot be truly accomplished without active participation of all the stake holders. It must be realized that corruption in our country not only threatens the concept of constitutional governance, but also degrades the institution of democracy and the Rule of Law. Our Constitution does not grant the liberty to anyone to be corrupt. The efficacy of every single fundamental right: originally envisaged or a product of judicial activism, depends on immunity from corruption in public and political life. The Constitution of India envisaging a democratic culture, doesn't permit the exploitation of public resources, power, position and preeminence for private gains.

The Commission has been stressing on predictive, proactive and participative vigilance measures in addition to building up public awareness to fight corruption. The Vigilance Awareness Week, which is being observed every year at the instance of the CVC with different themes and focus, has been making good impact amongst all the stakeholders including the civil society.

Role of media in combating corruption is equally significant. Today, we are in a transitional phase where old values are crumbling and new values are formed. Media also plays extremely vital role in our lives. It is like a mirror to the society, which reflects contemporary thoughts and actions, and shapes people's perception. It wields enormous power to affect their opinion. In such a backdrop, media owes huge responsibility of disseminating true and fair information about scams or scandals.

Neither the truth should be suppressed nor the untruth be exaggerated. An unbiased, ethical and fair publication can result into a virtuous cycle of transparent policy-making, clean government and faster economic growth.”

Union State Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension and Prime Minister's Office Shri V. Narayansamy also addressed the gathering. In his speech, Shri Narayansamy said that India can boast of some of the best drafted acts and most extensive institutions as far as the institutional and legislative framework, to fight the corruption is concerned., the Prevention of Corruption Act, criminalises corruption by public servants in the form of bribery, extortion and abuse of office for private gains. There is also Lokpal Act, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, etc. At the local level, some state governments have state laws that address specific aspects of corruption. The Right to Information Act represents one of the country's most critical achievements in the fight against corruption in recent years.

Minister also said that India is credited with having made considerable progress in terms of economic reforms. Now more focus given to Administrative Reforms and effective Legal Frameworks. The newly enacted Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, to my mind, will be a potent weapon to take care of the process of institution building, as according to this Act, there will be a Lokpal at the Centre, and each State Government will be under obligation to appoint a Lokayukta. This gives us a tremendous opportunity to achieve some kind of uniformity and standardization amongst the Central and State Governments by reorienting the existing anti-corruption institutions, be it the State Vigilance Bureau, Lokayukta or any other body, and bringing more order to the existing complex web of anti-corruption bodies. An ideal situation would be where each State has a Lokayukta as per the provisions of the Act. Also, every State should have a State Vigilance Commission, on lines of the Central Vigilance Commission, to look into cases of corruption against State Government officials.

On this occasion Shri Narayanasamy emphasized the need of a well defined code of ethics, and sufficient means of its enforcement and said that there is no single method for constructing an ethics infrastructure in public service. Rather, a combination of incentives and sanctions is needed to encourage professional standards of conduct. They, when combined with other relevant laws, promote openness and transparency by establishing processes that support the application of the latter. Some steps are already being taken to include psychological assessment at the recruitment stage, and inculcation of ethical values at the time of training to ensure that people

with the right values are selected for public service. But there is a need to periodically reinforce and reaffirm these values amongst the employees. We are effectively addressing all these issues for the welfare of citizens.

On this occasion, former Central Vigilance Commissioners and Vigilance Commissioners were felicitated by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India and the Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension. A documentary on Central Vigilance Commission, produced by Doordarshan was also screened.

Shri Pradeep Kumar, Central Vigilance Commissioner, Shri J.M. Garg, Vigilance Commissioner, Shri K.D. Tripathi, Secretary, CVC, Former CVCs and Vigilance Commissioners, Officers of Central Vigilance Commission, Govt. of India, and Public Sector Undertakings, Banks and other Institutions were also present on this occasion.

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