

THE TOOTHLESS TIGER OF ANTI-CORRUPTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION'S LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL

AUTHOR – TRINATH BHATTACHARJEE & PORTIA ROY

STUDENTS AT AMITY LAW SCHOOL

BEST CITATION – TRINATH BHATTACHARJEE & PORTIA ROY, THE TOOTHLESS TIGER OF ANTI-CORRUPTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION'S LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL, INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW (IJLR), 5 (8) OF 2025, PG. 271-279, APIS – 3920 – 0001 & ISSN – 2583-2344.

ABSTRACT

Corruption undermines governance, economic development, and public trust, posing significant challenges to India's democratic institutions. Among the mechanisms to combat corruption, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) plays a pivotal role as a statutory body established to oversee vigilance activities within the central government. Despite its critical mandate, the CVC has often been criticized as a "toothless tiger," limited by its advisory role, lack of investigative powers, and dependence on other agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for enforcement. This paper critically examines the CVC's role within India's anti-corruption framework, focusing on its legal foundations, operational limitations, and the challenges it faces in addressing systemic corruption effectively.

The analysis highlights the Commission's constrained autonomy, political influence in its functioning, and overlapping jurisdictions with other anti-corruption bodies as key issues that hinder its efficiency. Using case studies and legal precedents, the paper evaluates the structural reforms necessary to strengthen the CVC's capabilities. Recommendations include granting the CVC independent investigative powers, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and ensuring greater transparency in its operations. By addressing these limitations, the CVC can evolve into a more potent institution capable of meeting the rising expectations of accountability and integrity in governance.

❖ **INTRODUCTION: –**

Corruption has been a pervasive challenge in India, with significant implications for governance, economic development, and public trust in the institutions that govern. It distorts public policy, hinders economic progress, and undermines the rule of law. The consequences of corruption are particularly acute in developing countries like India, where the efficient functioning of public institutions is critical to ensuring equitable development and justice. The issue of corruption became a growing concern in India following independence, as it became clear that the success of democratic governance depended not only on transparent election processes but

also on ensuring integrity within government operations²⁹⁵.

In India, corruption has permeated various sectors, including the bureaucracy, law enforcement, and even the judiciary. The government's response to this issue has been the creation of institutional frameworks designed to counter corruption and promote transparency. One of the key institutions in India's anti-corruption efforts is the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), which serves as a guardian of transparency, probity, and accountability in public administration. The establishment of the CVC was a direct response to the growing demand for an independent

²⁹⁵ Santhanam Committee Report, 1962.

body to oversee corruption within the central government and its agencies (Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003)²⁹⁶. This demand has become even more urgent in the modern age of digital governance and public scrutiny.

India has several institutional mechanisms for tackling corruption, including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Lokpal (the Ombudsman), and various state-level vigilance commissions. Despite these multiple bodies, the CVC remains a key player in ensuring that vigilance work within the central government functions effectively. The significance of such a body cannot be overstated, particularly in light of India's commitment to good governance, which is a fundamental pillar of the Right to Information Act, 2005, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and other anti-corruption initiatives (Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988)²⁹⁷.

The CVC's Significance: Establishing Its Role as a Watchdog

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) was established in 1964, following the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee, which was set up to review the state of corruption in India's public sector and recommend measures to combat it (Santhanam Committee Report, 1962). The primary role of the CVC was to supervise the vigilance functions of government organizations and offer guidance on dealing with corruption cases involving public servants. Its creation marked the beginning of a dedicated effort to maintain integrity and probity within public institutions.

In the decades since its formation, the CVC has evolved into a key institutional mechanism for promoting transparency and accountability within the central government. The Commission's jurisdiction spans across various government departments, public sector enterprises, and organizations, giving it a crucial role in monitoring and overseeing vigilance work. The Central Vigilance Commissioner and

the Vigilance Commissioners play an advisory role in government departments, guiding them on how to investigate and prevent corruption.

The significance of the CVC extends beyond its advisory capacity. Over the years, the CVC has been tasked with overseeing investigations into high-profile corruption cases, recommending systemic reforms to address vulnerabilities, and ensuring that corrupt public officials are held accountable. Additionally, the CVC is empowered to recommend disciplinary action against corrupt officers and can also advise on measures to improve governance and prevent corruption at the administrative level (Vineet Narain v. Union of India).

However, despite these roles and responsibilities, the CVC has been criticized for its limited powers. Although it acts as a watchdog for the central government, it does not have the authority to directly investigate cases of corruption or initiate legal action. Instead, the Commission depends on other agencies like the CBI to take action based on its findings. This reliance on external agencies has been a major point of contention, leading to the question: Is the CVC truly effective in fulfilling its mandate?

The "Toothless Tiger" Metaphor: Overview and Relevance

The metaphor of the "toothless tiger" aptly describes the Central Vigilance Commission's predicament. A tiger is typically a symbol of power, strength, and authority; however, a "toothless" tiger implies a creature that is unable to assert its authority or take effective action. In the case of the CVC, this metaphor is used to describe an organization that, while endowed with significant responsibilities and a broad mandate, lacks the essential powers to enforce its recommendations or take independent action.

One of the primary reasons for the CVC's "toothless" status is its lack of independent investigative authority. While the CVC plays an advisory and supervisory role in dealing with

²⁹⁶ Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003:

²⁹⁷ Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

corruption within the central government, it does not possess the power to directly investigate cases of corruption or initiate legal action. The Commission can only make recommendations, and enforcement depends on the willingness of other agencies, such as the CBI or departmental authorities, to act on these suggestions. This lack of enforcement power has led to criticism that the CVC is, in many instances, powerless to address corruption effectively (Vineet Narain v. Union of India)²⁹⁸

Further, the CVC's role is often limited by its dependence on the executive branch of government, which can influence its effectiveness. The process of appointing the Central Vigilance Commissioner and the Vigilance Commissioners is carried out by the President of India, based on the recommendations of a committee that includes the Prime Minister, Home Minister, and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Critics argue that this process is open to political influence, undermining the CVC's autonomy and independence, and contributing to its characterization as a "toothless" entity in the fight against corruption (Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003)

This metaphor reflects a deeper concern about the efficacy of anti-corruption institutions in India and raises important questions about how to strengthen these bodies to ensure they can fulfil their intended roles.

Research Objectives: Aims to Analyze the CVC's Legal Framework, Limitations, and Potential Reforms

This paper seeks to critically analyze the Central Vigilance Commission's legal framework, its limitations, and the potential reforms that could transform it into a more effective body for combating corruption in India. The research will focus on the following key objectives:

Examining the CVC's Role and Powers: The paper will explore the legal foundations of the CVC, including the Central Vigilance

Commission Act, 2003, and the Vineet Narain judgment, which granted statutory status to the Commission. It will analyze how these legal provisions shape the Commission's role in addressing corruption, the challenges it faces, and the gaps in its authority.

Identifying the Challenges Faced by the CVC:

The research will examine the key limitations of the CVC, including its reliance on other agencies for investigation and enforcement, its advisory capacity, and the overlapping jurisdictions with other anti-corruption bodies. The research will also explore the political pressures that may affect the independence of the CVC.

Proposing Reforms to Strengthen the CVC: The paper will assess potential reforms that could enhance the CVC's effectiveness, such as granting it independent investigative powers, streamlining coordination with other anti-corruption agencies, and addressing concerns related to political influence in its functioning.

❖ THE ROLE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION: – Historical Background

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) traces its origins to the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption in 1962. This committee, constituted to address growing corruption in public administration, highlighted the need for an independent body to oversee vigilance activities in the central government. It proposed the creation of a vigilance commission that would serve as an apex body for advising and guiding vigilance efforts across public sector undertakings and government departments. The Santhanam Committee's emphasis on centralizing vigilance efforts laid the foundation for the eventual establishment of the CVC²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁸ AIR 1998 SC 889

²⁹⁹ Santhanam Committee Report, 1962: Recommendations for the establishment of an independent vigilance body to combat corruption.

Establishment Through the 1964 Government Resolution

Acting on the committee's recommendations, the Government of India established the CVC in 1964 through an executive resolution. As a non-statutory body, the CVC was initially tasked with monitoring corruption cases, recommending disciplinary actions, and providing oversight for vigilance work in central government institutions. The Commission's scope was advisory, focusing on vigilance administration rather than direct law enforcement³⁰⁰.

Statutory Status Post Vineet Narain Case

The landmark judgment in *Vineet Narain v. Union of India* (1998) significantly reshaped the legal framework of the CVC. The Supreme Court, in addressing the deficiencies in India's anti-corruption mechanisms exposed by the Hawala scam, directed that the CVC be granted statutory status to ensure its independence and effectiveness. This judgment recognized the need for an empowered and autonomous CVC to act as a watchdog over central government vigilance activities³⁰¹.

Consequently, the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, was enacted, conferring statutory authority upon the Commission. The Act institutionalized the CVC's role, enabling it to operate independently of the executive branch and establishing its jurisdiction over vigilance activities in central government organizations and public sector enterprises³⁰².

Legal Provisions Under the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003

Appointment Process, Tenure, and Jurisdiction

The CVC Act outlines the composition of the Commission, which includes a Central Vigilance Commissioner as the chairperson and two Vigilance Commissioners. The appointments are made by the President of India based on the recommendations of a high-powered

committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. The tenure of the Central Vigilance Commissioner and Vigilance Commissioners is four years or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier³⁰³.

The Commission's jurisdiction extends to all central government departments, autonomous bodies, and public sector undertakings. It is empowered to review the vigilance work undertaken by these entities and recommend actions to enhance transparency and accountability.

Supervisory Powers Over CBI

The CVC's supervisory authority over the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is a significant feature of the 2003 Act. The Commission monitors investigations conducted by the CBI into corruption cases and ensures their timely and impartial completion. This supervisory role was a direct outcome of the *Vineet Narain* judgment, which sought to insulate the CBI from political interference and strengthen its accountability³⁰⁴.

Case Analysis

The Hawala Scam and Its Impact on the CVC's Statutory Authority

The Hawala scam in the early 1990s was a watershed moment in India's fight against corruption. It exposed the involvement of high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats in illegal financial transactions. The Supreme Court's intervention in this case highlighted the systemic flaws in the country's anti-corruption framework, including the lack of an independent and empowered vigilance body. The judgment in *Vineet Narain* mandated structural reforms, including granting the CVC statutory status, to address these deficiencies and restore public confidence in anti-corruption mechanisms.

³⁰⁰ Government of India, Resolution Establishing the CVC, 1964: Executive resolution defining the initial structure and role of the CVC.

³⁰¹ AIR 1998 SC 889

³⁰² Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003

³⁰³ Section 4, Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003:

³⁰⁴ AIR 1998 SC 889

Post-2003 Reforms and Their Implications for Vigilance in Governance

The enactment of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, marked a significant reform in India's anti-corruption framework. It provided the CVC with legal authority to oversee vigilance activities across central government organizations. The statutory status enhanced the Commission's ability to function autonomously, free from executive control. Additionally, the Act codified the CVC's supervisory role over the CBI, ensuring greater accountability in corruption investigations³⁰⁵.

However, despite these reforms, the CVC's effectiveness remains constrained by its lack of direct investigative powers and its reliance on other agencies for enforcement. These limitations have led to criticism that the reforms, while necessary, did not go far enough in addressing the systemic challenges in India's anti-corruption framework³⁰⁶.

❖ CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION (CVC): -

Dependence on Other Agencies: Reliance on CBI and Other Enforcement Bodies

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), despite being the apex anti-corruption body, lacks independent investigative powers. It primarily relies on the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and other enforcement agencies to conduct inquiries and implement its recommendations. This reliance has often diluted the effectiveness of the CVC, as it lacks direct control over the investigative processes. The CBI, which is administratively under the Department of Personnel and Training, has its own set of priorities and constraints that may not always align with the CVC's directives. This dependency undermines the CVC's ability to act swiftly and decisively, particularly in cases

where administrative or political influences are at play³⁰⁷.

Advisory Role: Lack of Direct Enforcement Authority

The CVC's advisory status limits its authority to enforce anti-corruption measures directly. While the Commission can recommend actions against corrupt officials, it does not have the power to ensure compliance with its recommendations. Departments and organizations under its purview are not legally bound to act upon the CVC's suggestions, often resulting in delayed or diluted implementation. This advisory role restricts the Commission from exercising the decisive authority necessary to curb corruption effectively³⁰⁸.

Overlapping Jurisdictions: Challenges with Coordination Among Anti-Corruption Bodies

The anti-corruption framework in India includes multiple bodies, such as the Lokpal, state vigilance commissions, and departmental vigilance wings. This multiplicity has led to overlapping jurisdictions and a lack of clear demarcation of responsibilities. The CVC's role is further complicated by its limited jurisdiction over certain public sector undertakings and state government agencies. The absence of a streamlined mechanism for coordination among these bodies often results in duplicative efforts, inefficiencies, and gaps in addressing systemic corruption. The creation of the Lokpal under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, added another layer to this complexity, raising questions about the CVC's relevance and functional overlap³⁰⁹.

Political Influence: Concerns Over the Appointment Process and Autonomy

The process for appointing the Central Vigilance Commissioner and Vigilance Commissioners involves a committee comprising the Prime

³⁰⁵ Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003: Provisions outlining the CVC's supervisory powers over the CBI.

³⁰⁶ Transparency International, "India Corruption Report, 2022": Analysis of the CVC's limitations and challenges in combating corruption.

³⁰⁷ Santhanam Committee Report, 1962: Highlighting the necessity for independent investigative powers in combating corruption.

³⁰⁸ Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003: Detailing the advisory role and its implications for enforcement.

³⁰⁹ Lokpal and Lookouts Act, 2013: Analysis of overlapping jurisdictions among anti-corruption bodies.

Minister, Home Minister, and Leader of the Opposition. While this structure aims to ensure impartiality, it has faced criticism for being susceptible to political influence. The absence of adequate safeguards to insulate the Commission from external pressures has raised concerns about its autonomy. This issue is particularly significant when dealing with high-profile cases involving political leaders or influential bureaucrats, where impartial decision-making is critical³¹⁰.

Delayed Implementation: Inefficiencies in Acting on CVC Recommendations

Even in cases where the CVC has issued specific recommendations, the delay in their implementation remains a recurring issue. Bureaucratic inertia, coupled with resistance from the departments involved, often results in prolonged timelines for taking action against corrupt officials. Such delays erode public trust in the effectiveness of the CVC and allow corrupt practices to persist unchecked³¹¹.

Case Studies: Illustrating Challenges

Satyendra Dubey Case: Gaps in Whistleblower Protection and Delayed Action

The Satyendra Dubey case, involving the tragic murder of an engineer who exposed corruption in the National Highways Authority of India, highlighted significant gaps in India's whistleblower protection framework. Dubey had written directly to the Prime Minister's Office, detailing corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral highway project, but his identity was leaked, leading to fatal consequences. The CVC, tasked with whistleblower protection under the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014, was criticized for its limited role and inability to provide adequate safeguards for whistleblowers. The delayed investigation and lack of accountability in this case underscore the systemic flaws in the CVC's operational framework³¹².

2G Spectrum Case (2012): Role of CVC in Recommending Systemic Reforms

The 2G spectrum allocation scam, one of India's largest corruption scandals, exposed the vulnerabilities in regulatory and governance mechanisms. The CVC played a limited role in addressing the issue, primarily focusing on recommending systemic reforms to improve transparency in the allocation of public resources. However, its lack of investigative powers and reliance on other agencies like the CBI restricted its ability to take a proactive role in the case. While the Commission made valuable suggestions for systemic changes, the overall impact of its recommendations was hindered by delays and resistance from the concerned departments³¹³.

❖ REFORMING THE TOOTHLESS TIGER:

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE CVC: -

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), while pivotal in India's anti-corruption framework, has often been criticized for its limited powers and dependency on other agencies. Reforming the CVC is essential to transforming it into a robust institution capable of combating corruption effectively. The following sections outline potential reforms to strengthen the CVC's structure, enhance its engagement with the public, and improve transparency in its functioning.

Strengthening the CVC

1. Establishing an Independent Investigation Wing

One of the most significant limitations of the CVC is its reliance on external agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for investigations. To address this, the CVC should establish an independent investigation wing equipped with trained personnel, modern infrastructure, and the authority to conduct autonomous inquiries. Such a measure would not only ensure faster resolution of cases but also eliminate the influence of external

³¹⁰ AIR 1998 SC 889

³¹¹ Reports on Delays in Implementation of CVC Recommendations, Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

³¹² Satyendra Dubey Whistleblower Case, 2003: Evaluating the effectiveness of whistleblower protection mechanisms.

³¹³ 2G Spectrum Allocation Case, 2012: Assessing the CVC's role in recommending systemic reforms.

agencies, thereby enhancing the credibility of investigations.

2. Granting Punitive and Enforcement Authority

Currently, the CVC functions primarily as an advisory body, limiting its ability to enforce its recommendations. Granting the Commission punitive powers, such as the ability to impose penalties or initiate prosecutions, would significantly enhance its effectiveness. This would also act as a deterrent for corrupt practices, as officials would face tangible consequences for non-compliance with CVC directives.

3. Streamlining Coordination with Lokpal and Other Agencies

To reduce overlaps and ensure seamless functioning, a robust mechanism for coordination between the CVC, Lokpal, state vigilance commissions, and other anti-corruption bodies is essential. This could involve creating a centralized database for sharing information on corruption cases and setting up regular inter-agency meetings to align efforts and priorities. A statutory framework defining the roles and responsibilities of each body would further eliminate ambiguities and streamline operations.

Enhancing Public Engagement

1. Vigilance Awareness Campaigns

Public participation is a cornerstone of any successful anti-corruption strategy. The CVC should intensify its Vigilance Awareness Campaigns, focusing on educating citizens about their rights and the mechanisms available to report corruption. Utilizing digital platforms, social media, and grassroots outreach programs can amplify the reach and impact of these campaigns.

2. Digital Platforms for Transparency

To enhance transparency, the CVC should develop user-friendly digital platforms where citizens can access information about ongoing vigilance cases, submit complaints, and track

the progress of investigations. The use of technology, including artificial intelligence and data analytics, can further aid in identifying corruption trends and ensuring accountability.

Improving Transparency in Appointments

1. Reforming the Appointment Process

The process of appointing the Central Vigilance Commissioner and other officials should be revamped to reduce political influence. Recommendations include involving an independent panel comprising judicial and civil society representatives to oversee the selection process. A transparent mechanism for shortlisting candidates based on merit and integrity would further bolster public confidence in the CVC's independence.

2. Fixed Criteria and Public Scrutiny

Introducing fixed criteria for eligibility and conducting public scrutiny of shortlisted candidates can add another layer of transparency. This approach has been successfully implemented in several countries and could serve as a model for reforming the CVC's appointment process.

Case Analysis

1. Banking Frauds Monitoring (2019): Successes in Public Sector Reforms

In 2019, the CVC played a critical role in monitoring banking frauds in public sector banks. Through close collaboration with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and financial institutions, the CVC introduced systemic reforms to prevent fraud and improve accountability. This case demonstrates the Commission's potential when it leverages its advisory role effectively. However, the lack of enforcement authority limited its ability to implement further corrective measures, underscoring the need for structural reforms³¹⁴.

³¹⁴ Banking Frauds Monitoring Report, 2019, CVC: Insights into public sector banking reforms.

2. Lessons from Other Countries: Anti-Corruption Frameworks with Stronger Enforcement Powers

Countries like Hong Kong and Singapore offer valuable lessons for strengthening the CVC. Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), with its independent investigation and prosecution powers, serves as a benchmark for effective anti-corruption bodies. Similarly, Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) has demonstrated the importance of strong enforcement capabilities and political neutrality. Adopting similar measures in the Indian context could significantly enhance the CVC's effectiveness³¹⁵.

❖ CONCLUSION: -

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), often criticized as a "toothless tiger," holds a pivotal yet constrained position in India's anti-corruption framework. This concluding chapter synthesizes the findings, highlights the critical reforms required, reflects on notable case studies, and envisions the future of anti-corruption efforts in India with a reformed CVC at its helm.

Summary of Findings

The limitations of the CVC arise from its structural and functional constraints. Its reliance on other agencies, advisory role without enforcement authority, overlapping jurisdictions, and political influence in appointments undermine its efficacy. These challenges have often justified the metaphor of the "toothless tiger."

Cases like the Satyendra Dubey whistleblower episode and systemic corruption in the 2G spectrum allocation underscore the Commission's inability to take decisive action. Furthermore, inefficiencies in implementing recommendations and delayed responses highlight operational gaps. While the CVC has made strides in vigilance awareness and

systemic reforms, the lack of punitive powers significantly weakens its deterrent capacity.

Key Reforms Needed

1. Independence and Autonomy

A reformed CVC must operate independently of political influence and bureaucratic pressures. This includes transparent appointment processes, fixed tenures for officials, and statutory safeguards to insulate the Commission from external interference.

2. Enhanced Enforcement Authority

Granting the CVC punitive powers to impose penalties or prosecute offenders would transform it from an advisory body to an enforcement authority. This reform is essential to ensure compliance with its recommendations and establish accountability.

3. Systemic Improvements

Efficient coordination with Lokpal, state vigilance commissions, and other anti-corruption bodies is crucial. Establishing an independent investigation wing and leveraging technology for transparency and monitoring would address operational inefficiencies.

Case Reflection

1. Commonwealth Games Scam (2010)

The CVC played a significant role in unearthing irregularities in the organization of the Commonwealth Games, exposing procurement fraud and mismanagement of funds. However, the lack of enforcement powers limited its ability to prosecute those involved, leading to public frustration and delayed justice.

2. Punjab National Bank (PNB) Scam (2018)

In the PNB scam, where fraudulent letters of undertaking caused massive financial losses, the CVC highlighted lapses in banking oversight and recommended systemic reforms. While its recommendations were instrumental in strengthening banking protocols, the absence of investigative authority restricted its role to advisory functions. This case emphasizes the

³¹⁵ Anti-Corruption Success Stories: Hong Kong ICAC and Singapore CPIB models.

need for a more empowered CVC to prevent and address such large-scale frauds effectively.

Future of Anti-Corruption Efforts

A reformed CVC has the potential to become a cornerstone of transparency and accountability in India. With increased powers, independence, and public engagement, it can evolve into a robust institution capable of addressing corruption at all levels of governance.

1. Leveraging Technology for Vigilance

Integrating data analytics, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technology in anti-corruption efforts can enhance transparency and accountability. The CVC's existing digital initiatives can be expanded to include predictive monitoring systems for identifying corruption-prone areas.

2. Public-Private Partnerships

Collaborating with private organizations and civil society can amplify the impact of the CVC's campaigns and initiatives. Public-private partnerships in vigilance activities can foster a culture of accountability across sectors.

3. Learning from Global Models

Inspiration from anti-corruption bodies like Hong Kong's ICAC and Singapore's CPIB can guide reforms in the CVC. Adopting best practices such as independent investigation units, clear jurisdictions, and stringent accountability mechanisms will strengthen its framework.

4. Promoting a Vigilance Culture

A long-term anti-corruption strategy must focus on creating a culture of vigilance. Regular training programs for public officials, awareness campaigns for citizens, and incentivizing whistleblowing can foster a collective approach to combating corruption.

Concluding Reflections

The CVC, despite its limitations, has played an essential role in India's anti-corruption landscape. However, its current framework

restricts its potential to act decisively and effectively. The metaphor of a "toothless tiger" underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to transform the Commission into a robust and independent institution.

By addressing its structural and functional constraints, the CVC can emerge as a beacon of transparency and accountability. As India aspires for greater economic growth and global standing, a reformed CVC will be instrumental in ensuring clean governance and public trust in institutions.

❖ REFERENCES

Legislative Framework

- Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003
- Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013
- Vineet Narain v. Union of India, AIR 1998 SC 889

Reports

- CVC Annual Report 2010-11
- Punjab National Bank (PNB) Fraud Case Report, 2018
- MeitY Digital India Initiative Reports, 2021
- CVC Vigilance Awareness Week Reports, 2022
- Commonwealth Games Scam (2010) Reports
- 2G Spectrum Case (2012) Reports
- Satyendra Dubey Case (2003) Reports

Journals

- Transparency International Reports, 2020
- ICAC (Independent Commission Against Corruption) Success Stories
- CPIB (Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau) Annual Reports
- Global Anti-Corruption Frameworks: Lessons for India, 2020



INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW [IJLR – IF SCORE – 7.58]

VOLUME 5 AND ISSUE 8 OF 2025

APIS – 3920 – 0001 (*and*) ISSN – 2583-2344

Published by
Institute of Legal Education

<https://iledu.in>

- India's Anti-Corruption Framework: Challenges and Recommendations, 2019
- CVC Reforms: The Need for Empowerment and Independence, 2021

