

Module 4

Approaches to Vigilance: Punitive, Preventive
and Participative

Chapter 3

Participative Vigilance

Citizen participation in Anti-Corruption Efforts

Corruption undermines democracy, economic development, the environment, people's health and much more. It is, therefore, imperative that the public must be sensitised and motivated towards efforts at weeding out corruption. Themes of Vigilance Awareness Week-2016 – 'Public Participation in Promoting Integrity and Combating Corruption' and Vigilance Awareness Week - 2022 '*अष्टाचार मुक्त भारत - विकसित भारत: Corruption free India for a developed Nation*' appropriately captured the above submission.

Hon'ble President of India, in her message of VAW-2022 has highlighted that – 'The fight against corruption is the collective duty and responsibility of all the citizens of this great nation. Therefore, to eradicate corruption, citizen's participation is extremely important and essential.

The Central Vigilance Commission as an integrity and oversight institution is of the view that eradication of corruption cannot be achieved only by the efforts of anti-corruption agencies and therefore encourages different stakeholders to collectively participate in anti-corruption measures. Commission's endeavour is to foster an environment that instils a sense of integrity amongst the citizens of the country, with the active support and participation of the citizens and social institutions.

To enhance awareness among the public and its participation, CVC, in the Vigilance Manual-2021 has quoted observation of the Santhanam Committee set up in the year 1962, about the role of society at large in the fight against corruption - "In the long run, the fight against corruption will succeed only to the extent of which a favourable social climate is created. When such a climate is created, and corruption becomes abhorrent to the minds of the public and the public servants and social controls become effective, other

administrative, disciplinary, and punitive measures may become unimportant and may be relaxed and reduced to a minimum”.

Public participation can play a vital role in the fight against corruption by:

- ❖ Encouraging Ethical Conduct of the individual and the organisation and inculcating values of Truthfulness, Honesty, Integrity, Probity, Courage, Uprightness, and Respect for Rule of law.
- ❖ Stigmatising the culture of Corruption, favouritism, nepotism and promoting meritocracy.
- ❖ Similarly, the spirit of ‘consumerism’ leads to avarice and craving for easy money. If the Citizen is taught to say, ‘No to Bribe’, the Supply side of Corruption’ automatically gets stifled.
- ❖ Educating and Creating awareness about the - Rights and duties of the Citizen; and various Government Welfare Schemes;
- ❖ Acting as a Watchdog through Public Scrutiny of the actions of public servants by Exposing the wrongdoers and Standing by the upright and honest officials.
- ❖ Exhorting the Citizens and the Organisations to perform their lawful duties.

Outreach Programme for Promoting Public Participation

To foster public participation in promoting integrity and eradicating corruption, some of the initiatives of the commission are as under :

- ❖ **Integrity pledge:** To foster probity and integrity in public life, the Commission has launched an ‘Integrity Pledge’ which can be taken electronically by the citizen as well as by organisations. It can be accessed on the Commission’s website¹. By taking the Integrity pledge, citizens commit to uphold highest standards of honesty and integrity by following probity and rule of law in all walks of life, to neither take nor offer bribe, to perform all tasks with honesty and transparency, act in public interest and report any incident of corruption to appropriate authority. The Commission acknowledges citizens and organisations taking the Integrity Pledge, for their commitment to the cause of anti-corruption, through a certificate of commitment.

¹ <https://pledge.cvc.nic.in/>

- ❖ **Public outreach programmes:** Extensive exercise undertaken by the Commission through field offices of Public Sector Banks, Public Sector Enterprises, Educational institutions especially schools and colleges, Govt. Departments, Vigilance Study Circles, NGOs, etc. under a plan of action prepared by the Commission to spread awareness amongst the common citizens particularly the youth and students through various activities.
- ❖ **Vigilance Gram Sabha and other Grievance redressal programmes:** Various activities like meetings for creation of awareness on corruption and its ill effects, educating citizens on grievance redressal options available and organising competitions / melas / night choupals / cultural programmes are part of the “Awareness Gram Sabhas at village panchayat levels.
- ❖ **Seminars / Workshops / Presentations:** These are also organised during the week on anti-corruption theme in various institutions and organisations.
- ❖ **Use of Press / Electronic media:** Through articles, talks, panel discussions, etc. in Hindi, English, and Regional language.
- ❖ **Use of Social Media:** The Commission has started a twitter account on which public can share information about corrupt activities against a public servant / organisation.

Vigilance Awareness Week

As a part of various outreach programs for promoting public participation, all the Ministries, Departments and Government Organizations observe the ‘Vigilance Awareness Week’ under the direction and guidance of the Commission every year with a specific theme of creating awareness among public servants as well as citizens about the menace of corruption and need for its eradication. The week is observed every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October) falls in. ‘Theme’ plays an important role in observing ‘Vigilance Awareness Week’. It gives a momentum to all available resources to work in a well-defined direction wherein possibility of yielding good results increases many folds.

The Vigilance Awareness Programmes are organized in all offices of the Central Government, its subordinate and attached offices, Public Sector Undertakings, Banks, Autonomous bodies and Institutions under the Central

Government. On the first day of VAW, Integrity Pledge is taken in the morning by all public servants and is administered by the head of the department. Banners, posters etc. are displayed at prime locations in offices, at the corporate centres, regional centres, zonal offices, factories/works etc. to promote general awareness.

The President, the Prime Minister and other high dignitaries issue messages to the Nation on this occasion. Such messages are given wide publicity through the media and through CVC web site².

Integrity – A Way of Life

To encourage accountability and transparency in public life, integrity of an individual plays an important role. Therefore, integrity of a Civil servant and larger citizenry assumes greatest significance in building a corruption free nation. Integrity encompasses moral principles of highest order. Integrity of an individual helps in building integrity of institution in the eyes of public at large. It is also a way to live life honourably.

Central/State Governments/Organizations have their own well defined institutional framework to ensure the ethical behaviour and maintaining integrity by the officials under their control through Oath of Allegiance, Service/Conduct Rules and Canons of Financial Propriety, as discussed hereunder.

Oath of Allegiance

At the time of joining the service, every government/public servant has to take the following Oath of Allegiance to the Constitution of India.

“I,, do swear/solemnly affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to India and to the Constitution of India as by law established, that I will uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India, and that I will carry out the duties of my office loyally, honestly, and with impartiality.”

² <https://cvc.gov.in>

Service Conduct Rules

As per service conduct rules, civil servants/ public officials to maintain a very high standard of conduct and behaviour so that he/she earns the trust of the people and is emulated by his/her peers and subordinates. So it is imperative for every public servant to behave ethically as per respective service conduct rules and code of ethics of the organization.

Canons of Financial Propriety

Hugh money is incurred/invested by the Government organizations in various social developmental activities and creation of infrastructures. Therefore, Canons of Financial Propriety have been laid down in General Financial Rules (GFR), to ensure integrity of the decision making/spending authority in financial matters.

Every officer/official incurring or authorizing expenditure from public moneys should be guided by high standards of financial propriety. Every officer should also enforce financial order and strict economy and see that all relevant financial rules and regulations are observed, by his/her own office and by subordinate disbursing officers. Among the principles on which emphasis is generally laid are the following:

- ❖ Every officer is expected to exercise the same vigilance in respect of expenditure incurred from public money as a person of ordinary prudence would exercise in respect of expenditure of his/her own money.
- ❖ The expenditure should not be prima facie more than the occasion demands.
- ❖ No authority should exercise its powers of sanctioning expenditure to pass an order which will be directly or indirectly to its own advantage.
- ❖ Expenditure from public money should not be incurred for the benefit of a particular person or a section of the people, unless - (a) a claim for the amount could be enforced in a Court of Law, or (b) the expenditure is in pursuance of a recognized policy or custom.

- ❖ The amount of allowances granted to meet expenditure of a particular type should be so regulated that the allowances are not on the whole a source of profit to the recipients.

Involvement of Society

Parents, family, peer group, teachers, educational institutions, social intellectual and spiritual leaders, civil society, press, mass media including social media, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), etc. have a major role to play in the inculcation and dissemination of high ethical and moral values in individuals, organizations and the society at large.
