

LOKPAL

Powers

The Lokpal will have the power of superintendence and direction over any investigation agency including CBI

Lokpal can summon or question any public servant if there exists a prima facie case against the person

Any officer of the CBI investigating a case referred to it by the Lokpal, shall not be transferred without the approval of the Lokpal.

An investigation must be completed within six months. However, the Lokpal may allow extensions of six months at a time provided the reasons for the need of such extensions are given in writing.

Appointment and issues

A five-member panel comprising the PM, the Lok Sabha Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, CJI and an eminent jurist nominated by the President

The current Lok Sabha does not have a Leader of Opposition to sit on the selection panel.

This led to an amendment to the existing Lokpal Act to change Leader of Opposition to Leader of the largest Opposition party

Parliament is yet to approve the changes made by the amendment to the existing Lokpal Act

History

The idea of an ombudsman first came up in parliament during a discussion during 1963

First ARC recommended the setting up of two independent authorities- at the central and state level, to look into complaints against public functionaries.

The Lokpal Bill was introduced in parliament but was not passed. Eight attempts were made till 2011 to pass the Bill, but in vain.

Second ARC also recommended that Lokpal should be appointed to look into corruption issues.

Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2013, was passed in both Houses of Parliament.

Salient Features

The Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members.

The Lokpal will cover all categories of public servants, including the Prime Minister.

But the armed forces do not come under the ambit of Lokpal.

It made mandatory for public servants to declare their assets and liabilities along with that of their spouse and dependent children.

The Act also led to passing a separate whistle blowers act.