

## Quadrant II – Notes

**Programme:** BACHELOR OF ARTS (TYBA)  
**Subject:** POLITICAL SCIENCE  
**Paper Code:** POS 104  
**Paper Title:** Leadership Skills in Politics  
**Unit:** 3  
**Module Name:** Anti- Corruption Movement  
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### Notes

#### INTRODUCTION

- Corruption “deepens poverty, it debases human rights, it degrades the environment, it derails development, including private sector development, it can drive conflict in and between nations; and it destroys confidence in democracy and the legitimacy of governments. It debases human dignity and is universally condemned by the world’s major faiths.”
- In other words, as per the definition given by the World Bank in 2000, corruption is the “abuse of public office for unauthorised private gain”.
- Corruption has taken the shape of a fundamental problem affecting the social fabric as well as the political framework of Indian society.
- Hence, it can be found both on a large scale governance and also at the micro level affecting the lives of every common citizen.
- In a way, corruption in India has led to lack of transparency and accountability so far as public institutions are considered, thereby leading to an empowered bureaucracy and deep-rooted abuse of power.
- The outbreak of the Anti-Corruption Movement in 2011 was extremely relevant and in no time, it captivated the imagination of the masses and spread like wildfire.
- The objective behind the agitation was the demand for a legislation, which can facilitate immediate punishment of government officials accused of financial fraud.
- In addition to this, the protagonists of the movement also demanded that civil society should be given a say in drafting the Lokpal Bill.
- The Jan Lokpal Bill proposes to create institutions called Jan Lokpal and Jan Lokayukta at the levels of the central and state governments respectively.

- The main objective behind the creation of these institutions would be to ensure that corrupt officials are punished through time bound investigations.
- Both the Jan Lokpal and Jan Lokayukta would be receiving complaints against their respective government departments accused of corruption and would enjoy the power to impose departmental penalties on bureaucrats.
- These institutions are designed to provide relief to the common masses against the daily harassment they face while dealing with government departments.

### **Trajectory of the Movement**

- Anna Hazare began his 'indefinite fast' on April 5, 2011 at Jantar Mantar in Delhi to reinforce the demand for the formation of a joint committee comprising of representatives of the government and civil society to draft a rigorous anti-corruption bill with penal actions and giving more independence to the Lokpal and Lokayuktas.
- A number of social activists supported Anna's hunger strike. Spiritual leaders like Swami Ramdev, Swami Agnivesh, and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar also extended their support to the anti-corruption campaign.
- On June 8 2011, Anna Hazare gave an ultimatum to the government that the Jan Lokpal Bill should be passed by August 15, 2011. If not, he would then begin another indefinite fast from August 16, 2011
- Towards the end of July 2011, the Union Cabinet approved the Lokpal Bill keeping the office of Prime Minister outside its purview during his term in office and also excluded the higher judiciary and the conduct of Members of Parliament inside the Parliament.
- On the morning of 16 August 2011, Hazare, along with his close associates, was remanded to judicial custody and imprisoned for seven days after that. This act was condemned and protests mushroomed across states throughout India.
- However, in the face of protests all over India, the Delhi Police decided to release Hazare after a week.
- Over the next twelve days, the Gandhian leader along with his followers launched and continued his hunger protest at the Ramlila Maidan of Delhi
- Following Anna's hunger strike and the nation-wide ripples of remonstrations, a debate on the Jan Lokpal Bill was held in Parliament on 27 August 2011.
- Anna Hazare demanding three principles,
  - (i) citizens' charter,
  - (ii) lower bureaucracy to be under Lokpal through an appropriate mechanism and
  - (iii) establishment of Lokayuktas in the states,
- both houses of Parliament agreed to the principles.

## **LEADERSHIP**

- The anti-corruption movement, led by Kisan Baburao Hazare, more popularly known as Anna Hazare, was designed to highlight the issue of corruption, a reigning phenomenon in post-Independence India.
- It is Hazare's philosophy and principles that gave the initial push to this citizens' eruption, which later became a country-wide call for a corruption-free India.
- His choice of non-violent methods of protest has given him the tag of being a 'Gandhian'.
- Hazare and his supporters got their way, or at least most of it. The people made their voice heard. Parliament, too, had its say in asserting its right to frame the Lokpal legislation.