

2. Lokayukta

Prelims Syllabus: Constitutional Bodies, Regulatory Bodies.

Mains Syllabus: GS-II Statutory, Regulatory and Various Quasi-Judicial Bodies.



Why in News?

- The Kerala Lokayukta, has referred a case related to alleged nepotism and anomalies in the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF) to a three-member full bench for investigation.

What is Lokayukta?

- The Lokayukta is the Indian Parliamentary Ombudsman, executed into power, through and for, each of the State Governments of India.
- It is an anti-corruption authority. The object of Lokayukta system in a state is to make investigation of grievances, allegations against public servants.
- The origin of the Lokayukta can be drawn to the Ombudsman in Scandinavian countries.
- In India, the Administrative Reforms Commission, (1966-70), had recommended the creation of the Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta in the states.
- Before the passing of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act in 2013, several states in India passed laws for creating the Institution of 'Lokayukta'.
- Maharashtra was first in this respect with its Lokayukta body established in 1971.
- The lokayukta and upalokayukta are appointed by the Governor of the state. While appointing, the governor in most of the states consults

- (a) the chief justice of the state high court, and
- (b) the leader of Opposition in the state legislative assembly.

- In most of the states, the term of office fixed for lokayukta is of 5 years duration or 65 years of age, whichever is earlier. He is not eligible for reappointment for a second term.

Issues Related to Lokayukta:

- **No Clear Legislation:**

- ✓ The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 only has one section on Lokayukta, which mandates that states must pass the Lokayukta Act within one year and there is no information about their makeup, powers, or other features.
- ✓ States, in fact, have complete autonomy over how their own Lokayuktas are appointed, how they work, and under what conditions they serve.

- **Delay in Resolution:**

- ✓ One of the major challenges faced by the Lokayukta is the delay in the investigation and resolution of complaints.
- ✓ The Lokayukta is also dependent on the state government for funding and infrastructure, which can lead to interference and lack of independence.

Way Forward:

- **Strengthening the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act:** The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act should be amended to provide more powers to the Lokayukta, such as the power to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption against all public servants, including the Chief Minister and the judiciary.
- **Ensure Adequate Resources and Staffing:** The Lokayukta offices across the country need to be adequately staffed and resourced to enable them to effectively carry out their mandate.
- **Enhance Accountability and Transparency:** The Lokayukta should be made more accountable and transparent in its functioning. It should regularly publish reports on its activities, investigations, and outcomes.