



## POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY - CAN LAWS EFFECTIVELY PREVENT CORRUPTION?

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper explores whether legal frameworks alone are sufficient to curb corruption or if broader systemic and institutional reforms are essential. It analyses key Indian anti-corruption laws, including the Prevention of Corruption Act (1988), Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (2013), RTI Act (2005), and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (2002), evaluating their effectiveness and shortcomings. Judicial interpretations, such as Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1996) and Subramanian Swamy v. Manmohan Singh (2012), underscore the judiciary's role in enhancing accountability. Despite this, corruption persists due to weak enforcement, bureaucratic inefficiencies, political interference, and delays in legal proceedings. The paper also explores major corruption scandals, such as the 2G Spectrum Scam, Commonwealth Games Scam, Telgi Scam, and Indian Coal Allocation Scam, which revealed legal loopholes and spurred reforms like the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act (2015) and Companies Act (2013). However, conviction rates remain low, and corrupt practices continue. The study concludes that while robust, strong laws are crucial, they must be reinforced with independent oversight, institutional autonomy, transparent governance, and cultural reforms to create an effective anti-corruption framework.*

**Keywords:** Political Accountability, Anti-Corruption Laws, Governance Transparency.

### INTRODUCTION

*"Corruption is a cancer, a cancer that eats away at a citizen's faith in democracy, diminishes the instinct for innovation and creativity."*

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- Joe Biden.

Corruption has existed for ages, and it remains prevalent in modern societies. Corruption is like a tumour in one's social life, a tumour that does not develop overnight. A society is deemed corrupt when it is considered as one with immorality, lawlessness, and abuse of public power for personal benefits. The World Bank defines it as the misuse of public office for private gain, while the Oxford Dictionary describes it as the compromise of integrity in official duties in exchange for bribes or favours.

At its core, corruption thrives where accountability is weak. Political accountability ensures that those in power are held responsible for their actions. It serves as a check against corruption by enforcing consequences- ranging from fines and legal penalties to imprisonment- when public officials violate rules and regulations.<sup>1</sup> However, the real challenge lies in whether laws alone can effectively curb corruption or if deeper institutional and systemic reforms are required. Corruption, much like an elephant in the room, is difficult to articulate but becomes unmistakable once noticed. Regrettably, the conduct is not easy to see directly because, in most cases, acts of malfeasance are not perpetrated in broad daylight.

The social evil of corruption in India is woven virtually in every facet of the country and is common because there exists a wide acceptance of a despotic structure of fraud that the people are made to live in. The social order that breeds this form of corruption includes the wealthier segments of the population, the business magnates, the politicians who create these fraud laws, and the common man who follows the laws. Social order, as used here, has this meaning: It is the social relationship between the elements of control that governs an individual's behaviour. This indicates that there are elements, which are external to an individual, that have a bearing on their conduct. Social order covers groups, establishments, enterprises, or any structure that is our fragment of how the larger society functions. Corruption in India is so chronic and hard to eradicate because it is integrated socially.

India's persistent struggle with corruption as reflected in its global ranking, underscores the urgent need for not just stricter laws but also a cultural shift towards transparency and accountability. According to the Transparency International report, India ranked 93 out of 180

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<sup>1</sup> U Myint, 'Corruption: Causes, Consequences and Cures' (2000) 7(2) Asia-Pacific Development Journal 33,38

countries on the corruption perceptions index for 2023 as its overall score remained largely unchanged.

## COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS IN INDIA

**Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988:** It is a comprehensive anti-corruption law that is designed to combat corruption among public servants and in commercial organizations. It lists offenses pertaining to bribery, abuse of power, and undue advantages, ensuring accountability, includes a specialized legal framework, stringent punitive penalties and procedures for asset forfeiture measures. It created Special Judges to handle corruption cases efficiently. It ensures that both public officials and private entities are held liable for corrupt activities, with presumptions against accused persons strengthening enforcement.<sup>2</sup>

**Judicial Interpretations Strengthening Anti-Corruption Efforts:** *Vineet Narain v. Union of India* 1996 SCC (2) 199, this historic case had a big impact on India's anti-corruption efforts, even though it wasn't just about the Prevention of Corruption Act. In 1993, a public interest litigation (PIL) was filed seeking an independent investigation into a financial scandal involving payments to politicians in Maharashtra. The Supreme Court laid down guidelines for ensuring the independence and effectiveness of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which frequently investigates corruption cases. The judgment emphasized the need for a fair and transparent system.<sup>3</sup>

*Subramanian Swamy v. Manmohan Singh* (2012) 3 SCC 64, the matter of delays in approving the prosecution of public employees was discussed by the Supreme Court. In the 2g spectrum case, Swamy had requested authorization to bring charges against A. Raja, the telecom minister at that time. According to the court, if such a sanction is granted too slowly, it may defeat the purpose of the Prevention of Corruption Act. This ruling reaffirmed the necessity of acting quickly to bring charges against dishonest officials, cautioning that postponements may make the battle against corruption more difficult.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the 2018 amendment of PCA, Section 17A was added, and it was made mandatory for the approval of the government before any investigation of the public servant starts. This

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<sup>2</sup> Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (India).

<sup>3</sup> *Vineet Narain v. Union of India* (1996) 2 SCC 199.

<sup>4</sup> *Subramanian Swamy v. Manmohan Singh* (2012) 3 SCC 64.

overturned the court's effort to ensure accountability and maintain control in the hands of the executive.<sup>5</sup>

**Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013:** A separate anti-corruption ombudsman agency is charged with looking into complaints made against public servants and government entities. <sup>6</sup>By looking into these claims of corruption involving high-ranking officials such as the prime minister (with some limited restrictions), ministers and members of parliament serve a vital role in maintaining transparency and accountability. Their capacity to serve as a strong check against corruption has been weakened, nevertheless by a lack of funding, political opposition, and appointment delays. Their impact has been limited by bureaucratic inefficiencies and enforcement issues, despite their intended function in bolstering India's anti-corruption system.<sup>7</sup>

**RTI:** The Right to Information Act, of 2005 may help fight corruption by encouraging accountability and transparency, but a number of case laws show that it is not always effective in doing so.<sup>8</sup> This is mainly because of bureaucratic obstacles, abuse of exemptions, and public ignorance, which raises questions about the lack of awareness in some circumstances. Nonetheless, there have been cases where RTI has been successful. In the public distribution scam of 2007, members of the anti-corruption Ngo Krishak Muktisangram Samiti filed an application that revealed anomalies in the distribution of food intended for those living below the poverty line, which resulted in the arrest of multiple government officials. Notwithstanding these achievements, bureaucratic opacity, threats against whistleblowers, and response delays prevent RTI from reaching its full potential in combating corruption.<sup>9</sup>

**The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):** It includes provisions addressing bribery and corruption. Section 173 punishes bribery with imprisonment, a fine, or both, while Section 170 defines bribery as the act of giving or receiving a reward or gratification to influence someone

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<sup>5</sup> Ron Bastian, ““Be you ever so high””: A brief history of the Supreme Court’s call for impartial agencies’ (2024) <https://www.scoobserver.in/journal/be-you-ever-so-high-a-brief-history-of-the-supreme-courts-call-for-impartial-agencies/>

<sup>6</sup> Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 (INDIA)

<sup>7</sup> Vajiram and Ravi, ‘Lokpal and Lokayukta’ (2024) <https://vajiramandravi.com/quest-upsc-notes/lokpal-and-lokayukta/>

<sup>8</sup> The right to information act, 2005 (INDIA)

<sup>9</sup> Gopika Nambiar, ‘Right to Information as an Anti-Corruption Tool’ (2022) 2(2) *NUJS Journal of Regulatory Studies* 72,76.

in exercising an electoral right.<sup>10</sup> Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Section 169 penalizes a public servant unlawfully buying or bidding for property with up to two years of imprisonment, a fine, or both, and mandates the confiscation of the acquired property. Section 409 deals with criminal breach of trust by a public servant, prescribing life imprisonment or imprisonment of up to 10 years along with a fine.<sup>11</sup> Despite these legal provisions, conviction rates for corruption-related offenses remain low, primarily due to loopholes, procedural delays, and weak enforcement mechanisms. While the BNS seeks to modernize these laws, effective prosecution and deterrence remain significant challenges in combating corruption.

**The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988:** This act attempts to prevent the acquisition of real estate under a fictitious name, in which the true owner doesn't make the payment. Except in cases when the property is bought in the name of a wife or unmarried daughter, the act forbids benami transactions. Anyone who engages in a benami transaction could be fined or imprisoned for up to three years. Furthermore, the designated body has the right to seize benami properties without paying any compensation.<sup>12</sup> However, there haven't been many prosecutions under the Act, and enforcement has been lax. The usefulness of the approach is limited because it is still laborious and slow to discover and seize benami properties. Poor execution has greatly reduced the impact of this potentially effective instrument against illicit asset holdings.

**The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002:** According to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), money laundering is any procedure that involves the projection of criminal proceeds as pure property. Any property acquired by illegal means in connection with particular acts specified in the Act's schedule is referred to as "proceeds of crime".<sup>13</sup> Only those who have been charged with a scheduled offence may be charged with money laundering. The punishment consists of a fine of up to ₹5 lacks and three to seven years of hard labour. The maximum sentence is ten years in prison, nevertheless, if the offence is connected to the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985.<sup>14</sup> However, because investigating agencies lack money and experience, enforcement is still poor. Additionally, the Act's ability

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<sup>10</sup> Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860.

<sup>12</sup> The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988

<sup>13</sup> Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002

<sup>14</sup> The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985.

to combat financial crimes is diminished by the lengthy and legally complicated procedure of attaching and confiscating assets.

**The Representation of the People Act 1951:** Part VII, which addresses electoral offences and corrupt activities, seeks to ensure free and fair elections. Corrupt practices, such as bribery, undue influence, making false claims, and booth capturing, are defined in Section 123. Election offences include inciting animosity, submitting false affidavits, breaching voting confidentiality, engaging in disruptive conduct close to polling places, and booth capturing, as listed in Chapter III (Sections 125–136). Furthermore, Section 9 disqualifies those fired from government service for corruption or disloyalty, while Section 8A disqualifies those found guilty of corrupt activities. Although the purpose of these measures is to protect the integrity of the electoral process, the efficacy of the Act is undermined by lax enforcement and political influence, which frequently permit criminals to avoid prosecution.<sup>15</sup>

**The All-India Services (Conduct) Rules 1968:** This forbade accepting gifts or bribes, engaging in partisan political activities, and exposing secret information to protect the honesty and objectivity of public servants. These regulations aim to uphold ethical conduct in public service. However, the limited disciplinary actions against violators indicate that enforcement remains weak. Their effectiveness is further diminished by the lack of accountability and transparency in implementation, which permits wrongdoing to continue unchecked.<sup>16</sup>

**Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964:** Uphold Ethical behaviour in public service by prohibiting the central government personnel from engaging in activities that could jeopardise their impartiality or integrity. However, despite a strong legal framework, systemic problems, including lax enforcement, long bureaucratic processes, and a lack of accountability, severely limit its efficacy. To increase the effectiveness of these regulations in preventing misbehaviour, it is imperative to fortify enforcement, guarantee the independence of investigative organizations, and foster accountability and openness.<sup>17</sup>

## MAJOR CORRUPTION SCAMS IN INDIA

Despite the legal framework, India has witnessed several high-profile scams that highlight systemic corruption:

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<sup>15</sup> The Representation of the People Act, 1951

<sup>16</sup> The All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968

<sup>17</sup> Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964

**2G SPECTRUM SCAM (2008):** When former Telecom Minister A. Raja allocated 122 telecom licenses in 2008 at the prices estimated in 2001, he caused a loss of approximately 1.76 Lakh Crore to the Indian Government. The term “2G Spectrum Scam” is used to refer to this incident. Instead of auctioning the spectrum out at market rates, licenses were sold at set prices, which benefited certain telecom companies. The process was shadowy because aid benchmarks were set in a way that favoured certain companies, and documents were supposedly submitted prior from those companies. Some of the key allegations include the Issuance of licenses, and the sale of Spectrum, and services at 2001 prices when the number of mobile users increased tremendously.<sup>18</sup> The licenses were given out on a first-come, first-serve basis without setting a limit, which is the proper way of distributing. A. Raja reportedly caused an auction in the TRAI, Law Ministry, and Finance Ministry without heeding their advice. A. Raja, telecom personnel, and corporate heads were charged with conspiracy and corruption by the CBI.

**Legal Proceeding & Verdict:** In 2010, the government’s CAG accountant famously alleged that the losses of the government were monumental. Charge Sheets were filled out naming major telecom companies and personnel such as Reliance Telecom, Unitech Wireless, and Swan Telecom, along with 12 other people. In 2012, the Supreme Court cancelled all 122 licenses, ruling the allocation process unlawful.<sup>19</sup> In 2017, the Special CBI Court acquitted all accused for citing without evidence. India's biggest scam, despite the labels, was one in which the prosecution failed to prove charges in court and therefore secured an acquittal for all the accused, including A. Raja and DMK leader Kanimozhi. The licenses are cancelled by the Supreme Court; it stands good because they are bad in the allocation process.<sup>20</sup>

**Changes in Law:** After the 2G verdict, the government moved to an auction-based system for spectrum allocation wherein fair market price was ensured. Since 2012, all telecom spectrums have been sold through competitive bidding to maximize government revenue and prevent favouritism. The National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012 initiated reforms that covered aspects of transparency, accountability, and competition in the telecom sector. It ensured all these aspects, along with spectrum efficiency and rational pricing.

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<sup>18</sup> India Today <<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/>> accessed 15 February 2025

<sup>19</sup> The Hindu <[https://www.thehindu.com/topic/2G\\_Spectrum\\_Scandal/](https://www.thehindu.com/topic/2G_Spectrum_Scandal/)> accessed on 15 February 2025

<sup>20</sup> First Post <<https://www.firstpost.com/india/full-text-of-special-courts-judgment-in-2g-spectrum-scam-case-huge-scam-seen-by-everyone-where-there-was-none-4270757.html>> accessed on 15 February 2025



The case brought to light the inadequacies in India's anti-corruption laws and led to the enforcement of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Government officials now face enhanced scrutiny in their dealings with corporate entities in matters relating to resource allocation.<sup>21</sup>

**WAKF BOARD LAND SCAM (2012):** The 2012 Wakf Board Land Scam refers to allegations of massive misappropriation of land belonging to the Karnataka State Wakf Board, as had been reported by the Karnataka State Minorities Commission. The report revealed that nearly 27,000 acres of Wakf land across the state had been illegally sold or illegally encroached upon, resulting in an estimated loss of ₹2 lakh crore.<sup>22</sup>

**Findings of the Report:** Under the chairmanship of Anwar Manipaddy, the Karnataka State Minorities Commission investigated the case of misuse of Wakf properties. It was reported that lands about Wakf, which were meant for the welfare of the Muslim community, had been sold illegally, leased improperly, or encroached upon. Many such illegal transactions are said to involve politicians, officials at the Wakf Board, and real estate developers.

**Mont Operandi:** Properties belonging to the Wakf Board were sold at throwaway prices without proper authorization. The encroachments were enabled through fake documents and illegal transfers. Some of these lands were even signed over for lease on a more commercial or personal basis rather than being used for the intended benefit of the Muslim community.<sup>23</sup>

**Political Involvement:** The report listed several politicians and influential figures who it said had aided the scam. But high-profile people were never really prosecuted.

**Government and Legal Action:** The Karnataka government received the report, but no significant action ensued. Subsequent governments did not follow up aggressively on the allegations, prompting accusations that the issue was being covered up. The scam raised alarm over corruption in the Wakf administration and the absence of enforcing mechanisms.

**Impact and Aftermath:** The scam kicked off protests across the country, especially from the Muslim community because the Wakf properties are intended for the welfare of Muslims.

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<sup>21</sup> Ipleaders <<https://blog.ipleaders.in/case-study-2g-spectrum-case/>> accessed on 15 February 2025

<sup>22</sup> Times of India <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/politicians-middlemen-mafia-in-rs-2-lakh-crore-karnataka-wakf-land-scam/articleshow/12422183.cms>> accessed on 16 February 2025

<sup>23</sup> NDTV <<https://www.ndtv.com/karnataka-news/karnatakas-waqf-land-scam-worth-rs-2-lakh-crore-five-facts-473536>> accessed on 15 February 2025



Despite the seriousness of the allegations, there have been no blockbuster convictions. The case highlighted the need for greater oversight and reforms relating to the administration of Wakf properties in India.<sup>24</sup>

**Changes in law: Report Findings:** By initiating an inquiry into the misuse of Wakf properties, the Karnataka State Minorities Commission, headed by Anwar Manipaddy, acted at the right time. The report said, that in violation of applicable laws, Wakf lands meant for the welfare of the Muslim community were sold, leased, or encroached upon illegally. The illegal transactions allegedly included politicians, Wakf Board officials, and real estate developers.

**Modus Operandi:** Wakf Board properties were sold at throwaway prices without proper authorization. The encroachments were facilitated by fake documents and illegal transfers. Instead, some lands were leased for personal and commercial use instead of for the benefit of the Muslim community as intended. **Political Involvement:** It named several politicians and influential figures who were allegedly involved in the scam. But no major prosecutions were brought against any of the famous people involved. **Authorities and Government Response:** The report was filed with the Karnataka government but would be of little to no consequence. Subsequent governments failed to aggressively pursue the allegations, prompting accusations that the matter was being swept under the rug. The scam brought to light corruption in the Wakf administration as well as the absence of enforcement mechanisms.<sup>25</sup>

**ALI KHAN TAX DEFAULTERS (2008-09):** Hasan Ali Khan, a horse breeder based in Pune, emerged as India's biggest income tax defaulter in the financial year 2008-09. Khan was charged more than ₹50,345.73 crores for the assessment year 2009-10, and his total tax demand along with penalties reached about ₹89,000 crores. Khan also was said to be under investigation for concealing about \$8 billion in unaccounted funds in foreign banks and had been under investigation for money laundering.<sup>26</sup> His co-defendant, Kishinash Tapuria, also made it into the top ten with a tax liability of ₹602.80 crores. Some prominent names on the list included the now-deceased Harshad Mehta at ₹12,719.14 crores, A.D. Narrotam at ₹5,781.86 crores, and Hiten P. Dalal at ₹4,200.04 crores. In March 2011, the Income Tax Department raised its

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<sup>24</sup> The Print <<https://theprint.in/politics/waqf-issue-escalates-in-karnataka-while-2012-report-on-waqf-property-irregularities-mafia-gathers-dust/2348920/>> accessed 15 February 2025

<sup>25</sup> The Times of India <[mesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/politicians-middlemen-mafia-in-rs-2-lakh-crore-karnataka-wakf-land-scam/articleshow/12422183.cms](https://mesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/politicians-middlemen-mafia-in-rs-2-lakh-crore-karnataka-wakf-land-scam/articleshow/12422183.cms)> accessed 16 February 2025

<sup>26</sup> The economic Times <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/hasan-ali-khan-leads-the-list-of-top-ten-tax-defaulters-for-2008-09/articleshow/9581431.cms?from=mdr>> accessed on 16 February

total tax demand upon Khan and his associates to ₹89,000, with Khan himself liable for ₹62,000. The revised demand comprised a 24% penalty as the assessment was first done in 2008."This was revealed by the government in Parliament, where the tax amounts owed by these individuals were referred to the House, being of their significant sums.<sup>27</sup>

**Changing of law:** The aftermath of Hasan Ali Khan's 2008-09 tax evasion case saw several changes and developments in law: Tax liability was reassessed. Initially, the Income tax department demanded some ₹50,345.73 crore from Khan for the assessment year 2009-10, which later increased by an additional ₹62,000 crore, cumulatively including a penalty. However, the ITAT substantially reduced the assessment of proceedings by more than ₹10 crore in February 2016, leading to a final tax liability of about ₹3 crore. This was essentially based on the fact that a laptop seized in the case, which served as a major piece of evidence, did not belong to Khan but rather to a friend of Khan's associate.<sup>28</sup>

**The Process of Law:** On the direction of the Supreme Court of India to expedite the investigation, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Khan under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, in March 2011. The ED alleged that Khan had laundered money in favour of international arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi. Due to the very nature of the allegations, obtaining concrete evidence was proving a lot of trouble, leading to prolonged court proceedings. Judicial oversight and directions: In this case, the Supreme Court intervened, expressing its displeasure at the slow pace of the investigation. The court directed both the Union and Maharashtra governments to provide adequate protection to Khan and his family and to ensure that video recordings were made of the statements of both the accused and the witnesses. The whole case highlights the difficulties faced in prosecuting high-profile tax evasion and money laundering cases in India with proper safeguards ensuring prompt collection of evidence and adherence to due process.<sup>29</sup>

**COMMONWEALTH GAMES SCAM (2010):** Commonwealth Games Scam (2010) The Commonwealth Games held in 2010 in Delhi have projected serious allegations of corruption and subsequent financial mismanagement. Investigations have pointed towards the

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<sup>27</sup> Rediff <<https://www.rediff.com/money/report/ed-to-probe-hassan-ali-khans-assets-abroad/20110928.htm>> accessed 16 February 2025

<sup>28</sup> Times of india <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/hasan-alis-income-multiplied-in-6-yrs-to-rs-54268cr-cag/articleshow/7735895.cms>> accessed 16 February 2025

<sup>29</sup> The new Indian Express <<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2011/Mar/18/hasan-ali-to-be-in-jail-after-interrogation-sc-236829.html>> accessed 16 February 2025

involvement of extensive irregularities in organizing and executing the event. **Key Allegations and Incidents: Timing-Scoring-Result (TSR) System Contract:** Chairman Suresh Kalmadi's Organizing Committee (OC) gave the contract of the TSR system to the Swiss company at an exorbitant price, allegedly at the cost of more than ₹900 million to the exchequer. **Queen's Baton Relay (QBR) Expenditures:** Large sums were transferred to an obscure UK company, AM Films, without contracts or tenders. The British authorities have expressed concern over these transactions, pointing out that there was no clear documentation on how and why money was transferred, suggesting the possibility of financial irregularities. **Venue Development Support Services:** The venue development support services contract was awarded at more than ₹1.41 billion to a Swiss company, wherein several serious cases of forgery and irregularities were found, a probe into which the Central Bureau of Investigation or the Enforcement Directorate was advised to carry on. **Investigations and Legal Actions: CBI Inquiry:** The CBI in April 2011 arrested Suresh Kalmadi for conspiracy and cheating regarding the TSR. He was charged under different sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act. **CVC Inquiry:** The CVC inquired into 53 cases of corruption concerning the Games. By September 2012, the commission found that 28 cases were still being investigated, 13 cases had been forwarded to the CBI, and 12 others had been closed.

**Changes in Law:** The Commonwealth Games corruption scandal of 2010 in India exposed severe governance and accountability failures, triggering widespread public outrage and demands for systemic reforms. In response, the Indian government enacted various legal and institutional reforms to combat corruption and enhance transparency. **Key Legal Reforms Post-2010: The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013:** established Anti-Corruption Bodies: The Act mandated the establishment of a Lokpal at the level of the centre and the creation of Lokayuktas in the states. Granting them authority to investigate allegations of corruption against public servants up to the level of prime ministers, ministers, and members of parliament. By introducing an independent mechanism to handle complaints of corruption, the act was aimed at enhancing accountability in the government. **Public Procurement Bill, 2012.** Although the bill was not enacted into law, it was introduced to provide a coherent framework for public procurement. It aimed to promote transparency, accountability, and fairness in the procurement process to curb possibilities for corruption. It sought to standardize the procedures for awarding contracts to limit the irregularities witnessed in the Commonwealth Games. **Amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988: Strengthening Anti-Corruption Measures:** The 2018 amendments aligned the act with the Corruption Act in parity with international best practices.

The amendments included the criminalization of acts of offering bribes, the adoption of corporate criminal liability, and the setting up of stricter penalties against the offenders. Quicker Trials: The amendments aimed to hasten trial proceedings in corruption cases in a bid to obviate undue delay in justice processes.<sup>30</sup>

The reforms introduced in response to the Commonwealth Games scandal initially addressed the systematic failure it exposed. Establishing independent anticorruption bodies and strengthening the legal framework were significant strides towards enhancing transparency and accountability. However, their implementation continues to face several obstacles, including delays in the appointment of Lokpal members, bureaucratic clearances, and a weak institutional framework to battle corruption death knell for probity. The Commonwealth Games scandals also triggered these reforms to demonstrate unceasing vigilance and proactive measures to safeguard integrity within the public administration mechanism.<sup>31</sup>

**TELGI SCAM (2002):** In 2002 investigators uncovered the Telgi Scam, a massive counterfeiting operation masterminded by Abdul Karim Telgi orchestrated. The scam spread over different states through stamp paper counterfeiting activities which triggered both significant monetary damage and massive institutional corruption discoveries.

**Modus Operandi:** Scam runs into thousands of crores affecting multiple sectors, including banking insurance real estate the illicit operation thrived due to complex complexity, the complicity of corrupt officials, and filling Telgi to bypass regulator checks and continuing his fraudulent activities to his network infiltrated government offices where insiders facilitated the seamless distribution of fake stamp papers, undermining the integrity of the legal and financial transaction. The exposure of the scam led to significant legal and policy changes, including stricter regulations on stamp paper issuance and enhanced oversight mechanisms to prevent such large-scale financial fraud in the future.

The reported financial losses in this camp were initially estimated at 30 crores, however, an investigation conducted by multiple government agencies, including the Central Bureau of Investigation that is CBI the Income Tax Department, the director rate of revenue, the intelligence enforcement director, and the reserve bank of India, determined that the actual financial losses Amount to 172 crores Telgi owned 36 properties across the country and

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<sup>30</sup> Ipleaders <<https://blog.ipleaders.in/commonwealth-games-scam-legal-timeline/>> accessed 17 February 2025

<sup>31</sup> Times of India <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Commonwealth-Games-Scam>> accessed 16 February 2025

operated 123 Bank accounts through 18 different cities that include major urban centres like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, and Indore.<sup>32</sup>

**Corruption and Collusion:** The crime revealed widespread state corruption when Telgi provided officials with ₹12.38 crore in bribes to support his fraudulent activities.

**Legal Proceedings and Conviction:** Telgi received numerous charges at his trials, which included resourcefulness and forgery as well as counterfeiting. The court sentenced him a rigorous imprisonment after his conviction in 2007.<sup>33</sup> The scam contributed significantly to systematic changes in the printing, storage, and distribution of stamp papers across India. The government created electronic stamping systems to reduce counterfeit risks as they launched new rules to stop similar fraudulent acts moving forward. The Telgi Scam stands as India's most infamous financial scandal, requiring strong monitoring combined with systemic changes to stop future schemes of corruption.

**Changes in Law: Introduction of E-Stamping:** The primary goal is to destroy the perils of imitated stamp papers alongside improving stamp duty collection methods. The implementation stage of e-stamping by the government enabled electronic payments of stamp duty for both individuals and entities. The modernized stamping process eliminates paper dependency for stamping paperwork which decreases forgery possibilities.

**Amendments to the Indian Stamp Act, 1899:** The law received changes that established tougher punishments for anybody possessing or selling counterfeit stamp papers. The stamp paper regulations received enhancements that expanded regulatory oversight capabilities for stamp paper manufacturing and distribution boards to conduct better surveillance and maintain control measures. The Government sought to tighten the enforcement provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988. The Telgi scam exposed widespread corruption that existed throughout different departments of the government. Officials enforced the Prevention of Corruption Act with greater intensity to prevent public officials from using corrupt practices.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The Indian Express <<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/scam-2003-abdul-karim-telgi-story-stamp-8879390/>> accessed 17 February 2025

<sup>33</sup> Business Standard <[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/scam-2003-who-was-abdul-karim-telgi-and-what-was-the-stamp-paper-scam-123080800309\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/scam-2003-who-was-abdul-karim-telgi-and-what-was-the-stamp-paper-scam-123080800309_1.html)> accessed 17 February 2025

<sup>34</sup> India TV <<https://www.indiatvnews.com/explainers/scam-2003-the-telgi-story-who-is-abdul-karim-telgi-whats-the-scam-all-about-latest-news-entertainment-2023-09-01-890187>> accessed 17 February 2025

**Organized Crime Legislation:** MCOCA functioned as the basis to charge Telgi and his organization members under the framework of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, which established novel legal tools against massive financial deceptions.

**Impact of the Reforms:** The reforms worked to develop protected transaction processes for stamp duty, which reduced the opportunities for future scams. The implementation of e-stamping plays an essential role in stopping the distribution of fake stamp papers. A stricter enforcement policy of anti-corruption laws works to remedy the underlying issues that enabled the scam to occur. These considerable legal and procedural alterations came into being because of the Telgi scam, which demonstrated the need for ongoing reforms in public administration and financial regulation.<sup>35</sup>

**SCORPENE SUBMARINE SCAM (2005):** Surrounding the agreement for six Scorpene submarines made by India with Thales in 2005 stands an accusation of financial corruption known as the Scorpene deal scandal. The defense minister at that time Pranab Mukherjee allowed the acquisition of six submarines from Thales costing approximately \$3 billion (₹19,000 crores). The bribery investigations alleged that Indian defense personnel received \$175 million worth of payoffs (₹1,100 crores) from the company which secured the contract.

Middlemen supported by arms dealer Abhishek Verma allegedly paid large kickbacks to Indian officials to gain influence over the procurement process, according to published reports. The Central Bureau of Investigation started an investigation to pursue the corruption claims. The Central Bureau of Investigation declared to the Delhi High Court through its 2008 report that no evidence supported allegations of kickbacks in the contract. The judicial process extended the case through numerous years. The Delhi High Court dismissed the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) that was filed in 2007 in January 2016, thus ending all legal proceedings.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) resistance group criticized the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) administration by charging the government with corruption regarding a 4% payment commission for closing the agreement. The UPA government denied such allegations by stating that the transaction remained transparent and that it successfully negotiated price reductions. Official investigations confirmed that no wrongdoings existed while the Scorpene

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<sup>35</sup> The law Advice <<https://www.thelawadvice.com/articles/the-telgi-scam-unveiling-a-multi-crore-stamp-paper-fraud>> accused 17 February 2025

submarines proceeded with their manufacturing phase under technology transfer conditions that were part of the initial contract framework.<sup>36</sup>

**Changes in law:** Defense Procurement Procedure (DPP) Updates: The strict new guidelines and improved transparency standards derive from multiple revisions implemented in the DPP. The DPP 2016 introduced various steps to optimize procurement operations and boost responsible management.

**Emphasis on Indigenous Production:** The "Make in India" initiative serves as a government measure to boost Indian domestic defense manufacturing to reduce foreign dependence. These policy modifications demonstrate how the government works to enhance defense procurement integrity after controversial deals such as the Scorpene deal, but they do not stem directly from this case.<sup>37</sup>

**BELLARY MINING SCAM:** Illegal iron ore mining during the late 2000s became the focus of the corruption scandal known as the Bellary mining scam in Bellary district Karnataka India. The mining sector of the state exposed major corruption problems and regulatory system breakdowns through this scandal.

**Key Aspects of the Scam:** Near Reddy brothers Gali Janardhana Reddy and Gali Karunakara Reddy headed several mining companies which obtained accusations for mining operations extending beyond their approved lease areas together with encroaching on forest territories and underreporting mining outputs to prevent tax payments and royalty obligations.<sup>38</sup> The unauthorized mining activities caused extensive environmental destruction through deforestation and soil erosion as well as pollution, which severely affected the natural ecosystem. In 2010, R. Gokul, who served as Deputy Conservator of Forests, conducted a seizure of illegally mined 8.5 lakh tonnes at Belekeri Port. The exported portion of seized ore later sparked more legal investigations and public demands owing to its illicit shipping. The 2011 Karnataka Lokayukta investigation report charged B.S. Yeddyurappa, who was then the Chief Minister, alongside various other prominent figures, with accepting unethical payments

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<sup>36</sup> The Economic Times <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/no-kickbacks-paid-in-2005-scorpene-submarine-deal-centre-to-delhi-high-court/articleshow/49438346.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 17 February 2025

<sup>37</sup> The tribune <<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/nation/no-scam-in-rs-19-000-crore-scorpene-deal-delhi-hc-183300/>> accessed on 16 February 2025

<sup>38</sup> New Indian Express <<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2011/Sep/20/the-bellary-mining-scam-292583.html>> accessed 18 February 2025



to authorize illegal mining operations. The report compelled Yeddyurappa to resign as Chief Minister of Karnataka.<sup>39</sup>

**Investigations and Legal Proceedings:** The Central Bureau of Investigation conducted investigative procedures regarding the allegations. A special CBI court acquitted B.S. Yeddyurappa along with others in a connected bribery case because the evidence was insufficient in October 2016.<sup>40</sup>

**Impact and Reforms:** Through the Bellary mining scandal, authorities revealed the necessity of strong mining regulation reform, together with stronger enforcement mechanisms to stop future similar abuses. The mining scandal revealed that transparency, together with accountability, must be present during mining operational activities. To obtain comprehensive information about the Bellary mining scam, read The New Indian Express's published report.

**Changes in law:** Establishment of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB): The Karnataka government established the Anti-Corruption Bureau in 2016 by moving investigation power from the Karnataka Lokayukta to the newly formed bureau. The objective behind this implementation was to establish an expert body focused on fighting corruption at a higher level of effectiveness.<sup>41</sup>

**Amendments to the Karnataka Lokayukta Act:** The Karnataka Lokayukta Act witnessed an amendment in 2015 that expanded the qualifications legislators must meet before taking the Lokayukta or UpaLokayukta positions. An amendment allowed High Court judges who had completed a specific service term to become eligible candidates to take up these appointments.

**Policy Revisions in Mining Regulations:** The government-initiated policy revisions to create better regulatory procedures while promoting open monitoring and maintaining environmentally responsible mining methods after illegal mining became a widespread problem. These reforms emphasize new policy measures to stop future scams by adding proper supervision systems and stricter control measures. These reforms represented the government's

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<sup>39</sup> The Print <<https://theprint.in/politics/cbis-clean-chit-to-reddy-brothers-in-mining-scam-blows-holes-in-bjps-corruption-plank/54237/>> accessed on 18 February 2025

<sup>40</sup> Down to Earth <<https://theprint.in/politics/cbis-clean-chit-to-reddy-brothers-in-mining-scam-blows-holes-in-bjps-corruption-plank/54237/>> accessed on 18 February 2025

<sup>41</sup> Ritimo <<https://www.ritimo.org/The-Horrors-of-Bellary>> accessed on 18 February 2025

response to problems raised by the Bellary mining scandal to create ethical standards for mining operations in Karnataka.<sup>42</sup>

**THE AGUSTA-WESTLAND SCANDAL:** The 2013 Indian helicopter bribery scandal known as AgustaWestland chopper scam surrounded allegations of corruption against AgustaWestland which is Finmeccanica's Italian subsidiary because of their sale of 12 VVIP helicopters. The government spent ₹3,546 crore for the helicopters that were meant to enhance the transport of high-ranking officials.<sup>43</sup>

**Key Events:** In February 2010 the Indian government executed a contract with AgustaWestland to purchase 12 AW101 helicopters intended specifically for VVIP purposes. The honcho at Finmeccanica Giuseppe Orsi was arrested by Italian authorities after allegations surfaced about his role in bribes and corrupt acts during the agreement. A total of €51 million (approximately ₹400 crore) emerged as kickback payments that resulted in the successful bid for the contract. Indian government officials participated in the allegations by accepting bribes from former Indian Air Force Chief S.P. Tyagi during the procurement stage. The Indian government terminated the contract with AgustaWestland in January 2014 because the company violated the pre-contract integrity pact conditions.<sup>44</sup> The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) initiated legal proceedings to prosecute individuals plus other entities that participated in the deal. Main executives who avoided punishment in Italy's courtroom received their first verdict before appeals enforced their conviction only to have those convictions reversed by court action. The AgustaWestland scandal exposed major weaknesses in India's defence purchasing methods, which prompted demands for elevated procurement transparency as well as tightened anti-corruption protocols for new defense contracts. Major corruption in Indian defence procurement became exposed through the 2013 AgustaWestland chopper scam, which created multiple governmental measures to enhance defense procurement transparency and accountability.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Business Standard <[https://www.business-standard.com/content/press-releases-ani/hero-of-bellary-mining-scam-dipak-sarmah-gets-eco-warrior-lifetime-achievement-award-124091400263\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/content/press-releases-ani/hero-of-bellary-mining-scam-dipak-sarmah-gets-eco-warrior-lifetime-achievement-award-124091400263_1.html)> accessed 18 February 2025

<sup>43</sup> Business Standard <<https://www.business-standard.com/about/what-is-agustawestland-vvip-chopper-scam>> accessed on 18 February 2025

<sup>44</sup> Economic Times <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/agusta-westland-vvip-chopper-scam-all-about-indias-biggest-defence-scam-after-bofors-what-sc-said-about-it/articleshow/108591961.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 18 February 2025

<sup>45</sup> Hindustan Times <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/agustawestland-case-sc-grants-bail-to-christian-michel-in-cbi-probe-101739934121099.html>> assessed 19 February 2025

The important action was Contract Cancellation and Legal Proceedings: The government terminated its AgustaWestland contract in 2014 while it launched criminal examinations of all participants responsible for the deal. Lifting of Procurement Ban with Conditions: The Indian government allowed Leonardo Spa (which used to be Finmeccanica) to continue business operations in 2021 but imposed certain restrictions on their activities. The company received limitations through which it must avoid commercial claims and civil lawsuits against previous contracts with the Indian government, and all future business relations should proceed with no bias. The government continues to take action regarding defense procurement, but there is no prominent documentation regarding substantial legal reforms aimed at defense procurement processes. Public officials concentrate on both existing rule enforcement and more stringent compliance to stop further occurrences of similar scandals.<sup>46</sup>

**SATYAM SCAM:** The company scandal at Satyam unfolded in January 2009, leading to widespread descriptions of its scale and influence on corporate governance, similar to Enron. At the time a major IT services provider in India, Satyam Computer Services functioned under the direction of its founder Byrraju Ramalinga Raju as chairman. Byrraju Ramalinga Raju admitted to financial statement manipulation over several years when he confessed on January 7, 2009. He admitted to creating artificial bank and cash deposits worth ₹5,040 crore or \$1 billion, and he also created unrealized cash receivables of ₹490 crore. The confession showed that Satyam had inflated its profits, which led to misleading both investors and company stakeholders.

The examination revealed that Satyam had fabricated assets which did not exist along with nonexistent cash reserves. The financial misrepresentation became clear when operating margin reports showed 24%, whereas the true margin stood at only 3%. There was strong criticism targeted at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) as Satyam Computers' external auditor because they failed to uncover the fraud. SEBI took enforcement action against PwC by banning them from auditing listed companies in India for two years beginning in 2018 because of their alignment with fraud and their non-compliance with auditing standards.<sup>47</sup> April 2015 brought criminal court convictions for Ramalinga Raju and his nine co-accused on different offenses, including both trust breakage and document falsification, in addition to conspiracy

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<sup>46</sup> The Hindu <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/agustawestland-chopper-sc-am-agrees-to-hear-regular-bail-plea-of-christian-michel-in-january/article68954026.ece>> accessed 19 February 2025

<sup>47</sup> Satyam <[https://www.mlsu.ac.in/econtents/5678\\_Satyam.pdf](https://www.mlsu.ac.in/econtents/5678_Satyam.pdf)> accessed 18 February 2025

charges. Seven years of prison sentences along with ₹5.5 crore fines each were the court's verdict given to them.

**Aftermath and Acquisition:** Following the Satyam scandal, the Indian government took control of the company. Tech Mahindra gained ownership of 31% of Satyam in a public auction in April 2009, through which it established Mahindra Satyam. The companies finalized their union through a merger when they combined operations in June 2013. The Satyam scandal triggered Indian regulatory organizations to establish heightened corporate governance standards that included stricter auditing techniques together with greater corporate transparency and more robust oversight within the private sector.

A 2009 corporate fraud at Satyam became the biggest of its kind in India which prompted major reforms in how the nation regulates its corporate governance and its regulatory structures. New corporate governance measures introduced transparency while strengthening accountability as well as oversight mechanisms for firms.<sup>48</sup> The enactment of the Companies Act 2013 introduced new provisions that substituted the 1956 Companies Act to boost corporate governance frameworks throughout businesses. A new law imposed more defined roles that independent directors needed to complete while ensuring direct supervision of managerial tasks. Corporate organizations needed to establish audit committees and set forth robust internal controls according to the Act. Auditor Rotation and Accountability emerged from the Act to prevent extended working relationships between auditors and their clients by requiring auditing firms to switch personnel. Auditors needed to fulfill detailed reporting obligations under this Act for detecting and reporting fraudulent conduct. Thanks to the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), auditing standards received complementary oversight.<sup>49</sup>

**Strengthening of Regulatory Bodies:** granted powers to The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) obtained statutory powers through the Companies Act 2013 to strengthen its ability to investigate corporate fraud. The agency was also empowered to make arrests after receiving the power to enforce compliance against violators. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) modified the Listing Agreement with two primary sections that require vigilance systems and detailed audit committee functions for suspected fraudulent activities. Under the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations of 2015, all listed

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<sup>48</sup> India Forensic <<https://indiaforensic.com/satyam-investigation-report-by-sebi/?srsltid=AfmBOorNQY1jQU1xBGEx59oujQYX6KEsDJ90qhSBvNIQTWmnvH31GRl8>> accessed 19 February 2025

<sup>49</sup> Indian Kanoon <<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/174473481/>> accessed 19 February 2025

companies were subject to enhanced disclosure regulations. Introduction of Whistleblower Mechanisms: All listed companies had to implement vigil mechanism systems under the Companies Act 2013, which became known as whistleblower policies. The provision enabled stakeholders to report unethical conduct while protecting them from retribution, which built an open work environment.<sup>50</sup> Revised Guidelines and Voluntary Codes: After the scandal happened, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs created the Corporate Governance Voluntary Guidelines, which motivated companies to use best governance practices. The guidelines specified responsibilities that covered the board's audit committees and independent director functions. The reforms together worked toward rebuilding investor confidence while stopping the repeat of corporate unethical conduct, thus significantly changing India's post-Satyam corporate regulatory framework.

**INDIAN COAL ALLOCATION SCAM (2012):** The Indian Coal Allocation Scam (2012), popularly known as Coalgate, exposed governmental misconduct in assigning coal blocks to public and private entities through irregular procedures. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) exposed the scandal in its report by demonstrating process irregularities and calculating substantial losses suffered by the national treasury. The Indian government holds extensive coal resources, and companies receive coal blocks to increase production levels.<sup>51</sup> During the period from 1993 to 2010, the government allocated coal blocks through a procedure of discretionary allocation instead of conducting open auctions.<sup>52</sup>

**CAG Report (2012):** The CAG calculated that the government sacrificed ₹1.86 lakh crore of revenue because coal blocks had non-auctioned price allocations. The government allowed biased practices for key companies while showing insufficient clarity about the distribution process, according to the report. During its leadership Congress plus Prime Minister Manmohan Singh received profound political attack. The main opposition party, namely the BJP, pressured Prime Minister Singh to resign from office. The Central Bureau of Investigation received orders to investigate as it filed multiple First Information Reports against companies together with their officials for their actions.

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<sup>50</sup> Trade Brains <<https://tradebrains.in/satyam-scam/>> accessed 19 February 2025

<sup>51</sup> India Today <<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/explained-what-is-the-coal-scam-all-about-in-which-madhu-koda-is-held-guilty-1106352-2017-12-13>> accessed February 2025

<sup>52</sup> G.J.C.M.P <<https://www.longdom.org/articles-pdfs/coal-is-gold-the-coalgate-scam.pdf>> accessed 19 February 2025

The Supreme Court of India executed a verdict against 214 out of 218 coal block allocations from 1993 to 2014 because these allocations were named 'arbitrary and illegal'. A variety of prominent individuals such as industrialists and bureaucrats received legal charges.<sup>53</sup> After this scandal began, numerous policy transformations took place, resulting in the implementation of an auction-based allocation system in 2015. Several convictions happened in this case, including former Jharkhand CM Madhu Koda. The legal proceedings for certain cases continue without a verdict because insufficient evidence led to the acquittal of others. The court proceedings led to convictions of several individuals, among them being former Jharkhand CM Madhu Koda. The legal process for certain cases continues, and some defendants obtain acquittal due to insufficient evidence.

### Changes in the Law –

1. **Supreme Court's 2014 Judgment – Cancellation of Coal Block Allocations:** The Supreme Court conducted a review of 214 out of 218 coal block allocations made between 1993 and 2021 and declared them to be both unjustified and illegitimate. Through this decision, the Supreme Court confirmed that resources must obtain proper allocation through methods similar to auctions.
2. **Introduction of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015:** In order to eliminate legal deficiencies and establish fair coal resource allocation, the government introduced The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 contains three essential provisions: Replaced discretionary allocation with auctions for coal blocks. Private companies gained access to engage in coal mining activities for commercial purposes. The organization established processes that supported clear bidding alongside competition.
3. **The government must transition natural resources distribution to competitive auctions:** The Supreme Court followed a similar path to the 2G Spectrum Scam verdict and issued a ruling that forced all natural resources (including coal and minerals and spectrum) to undergo auction sales to stop arbitrary distribution.<sup>54</sup> The government achieved equal pricing through electronic auctions of coal blocks, which eliminated the discriminatory awarding of resources.
4. **Amendment to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957:** Auctions became the primary method of distributing mining licenses while abandoning

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<sup>53</sup> Ipleaders <<https://blog.ipleaders.in/coalgate-scam-a-legal-picture/>> accessed 19 February 2025

<sup>54</sup> Lawful Legal <<https://lawfullegal.in/the-coal-block-allocation-scam-a-comprehensive-legal-and-political-analysis/>> accessed 19 February 2025

the previous policy of giving leases based on when operations began. The provisions related to environmental and social responsibility in mining operations received increased strengthening.

The government took measures to enhance the Prevention of Corruption Act from 1988. The Coalgate scandal led to the implementation of strict anti-corruption policies that governed government resource distribution and buying procedures. Today's public servants must face responsibility for both governmental financial damage and preferential treatment during operations.<sup>55</sup>

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Despite India's comprehensive anti-corruption framework, systemic issues like political interference, judicial delays, and opaque electoral funding continue to enable corruption. To enhance accountability and transparency, the following measures should be prioritized:

1. **Strengthening Independent Anti-Corruption Bodies:** Ensuring the independence of agencies like the Lokpal, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and Enforcement Directorate (ED) by eliminating political influence over their appointments and investigations. Granting financial and operational autonomy to these agencies to prevent executive interference.
2. **Speedy Trials for Corruption Cases:** Establishing fast-track courts to handle high-profile corruption cases, ensuring swift justice, and deterring future offenses. Reducing procedural delays by implementing stricter timelines for prosecution approvals and judicial proceedings.<sup>56</sup>
3. **Campaign Finance Reform:** Introducing greater transparency in political donations and election funding to curb the influence of black money in politics. Implementing real-time disclosure of political contributions and strengthening oversight mechanisms to monitor election expenditures for enhanced accountability and integrity in the electoral process.
4. **Citizen Participation & Social Accountability** expanding mechanisms such as social audits, Right to Information (RTI) activism, and public reporting systems to Strengthen

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<sup>55</sup> The Hindu <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/odisha-coal-scam-case-delhi-court-acquits-six-including-ex-coal-secretary/article68977668.ece>> accessed 19 February 2025

<sup>56</sup> Edu Mound <<https://edumound.com/article/an-insight-on-coalgate-scam-indias-largest-scam/>> accessed 19 February



transparency but also fosters a culture of accountability. Additionally, ensuring robust protection for whistleblowers and activists safeguard them from retaliation and encourages the exposure of corrupt practices.<sup>57</sup>

By implementing these measures, India can work toward a more accountable, transparent, and corruption-resistant governance framework. Legislative reforms, institutional integrity, and public vigilance remain critical in preventing corruption from undermining democratic institutions.

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<sup>57</sup> Comptroller and Auditor General of India <<https://cag.gov.in/en/audit-report/details/1837>> accused February 2025