

Protection of whistle-blowers

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In 2003, the scandalous death of National Highways Authority of India Engineer Satyendra Dubey triggered nationwide debates and protests and demand to shield those who expose corruption and stand against evildoers. In this case, Satyendra Dubey, the brave soul, lost his life because he raised his voice and wrote letters to the Prime Minister's Office about colluded corruption by contractors, government officers and politicians in the Golden Quadrilateral project.

Following this incident, the issue of safety and protection of whistle-blowers was strongly pondered upon by the government as well as by the apex court. Whistle-blowers are those who expose corruption and fraud in organizations to denounce the wrongdoer by filing a law suit or a complaint with government authorities that prompts a criminal investigation into the organization's alleged behaviour.

The Whistle-blowers Protection Act, 2011 was initiated by the Cabinet of India to eradicate corruption and mis-

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management, which was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2011, by the Rajya Sabha in 2014 and was finally enacted in 2014 after the President's enunciation. Various amendments were eventually made to the same act in the following years. With the growth of malpractices and venality in the commercial sector, various incorporations in the Companies Act-2013 was also brought about to eliminate such shortcomings through stricter compliance and vigilance

mechanism. Section 206 to 229 of the Act emphasizes on a comprehensive structure of inquiry, investigation and inspection of ill-practices by external agents who can become whistle-blowers.

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According to the provisions of the Act, a whistle-blower cannot file a complaint anonymously. It is evidently specified in the act that no action shall be taken if any such revelation does not express the identity of the complainant. This is one of the foremost issues that is confronted by most of the people. These valiant whistle-blowers are safeguarding our rights, and their efforts should be celebrated, but instead, they face intimidations, ferocity, smear campaigns and even murder. Hence if the whistle-blower policy is implemented effectively, it can become a big deterrent to people with malicious intents. In order to have a corporate environment free from all scams and deceits, ensuring high level of integrity and transparent governance, effective implementation and enhancing safeguard measures in the Whistleblower Act, is a crucial and indispensable step.

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