

GS Mains Daily Answer Writing

Week 2 - Day 2

Model Structures

1. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work?

Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee. (10 marks)

Model Structure

Introduction

- Parliamentary committees draw their authority from Article 105 (on privileges of Parliament members) and Article 118 (on Parliament's authority to make rules for regulating its procedure and conduct of business).

Main Body

- Usefulness of committees for parliamentary work
 - They help Parliament in managing its business in a better way.
 - It is easier to examine a topic in depth by a small committee than by an entire parliament.
 - These enable inputs from experts and also directly from people.
 - Eg. Departmental Standing Committees often invite comments from the public.
 - Anti-defection law does not apply to committees — therefore, decisions are not usually made on party lines.
 - These committees allow members to focus on some specific areas and build their expertise, which helps them scrutinise issues more thoroughly.
 - They help to keep a vigil over Government expenditure and performance. e.g. Public Accounts Committee.
- Role of Estimates committees -
 - To examine the estimates included in the budget and suggest economies in public expenditure.
 - It suggests alternative policies in order to bring about the efficiency and economy in administration.

- It brings to the notice of the Parliament, the ineffectiveness of the policy and need for changes in policy.

However, the effectiveness of the role of the committee is limited by the followings-

- It cannot question the policy laid down by the Parliament.
- It examines the budget estimates only after they have been voted by the Parliament, and not before that.
- Its recommendations are advisory and not binding on the ministries.

2. “Local self-government has not proved to be an effective instrument of governance.” Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation. (10 marks)

Model Structure

Introduction

- Decentralisation is one of the major goals in India’s democratic system. This has allowed creation of Panchayats and Municipalities for local self government (through 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment). But it has not been fully successful in implementation.

Main Body

- Drawbacks of local self government system in India
 - The Local Self Governments are dependent on the states for:
 - Functions: The progress of devolution of powers and responsibilities to local governments at various levels is poor and uneven.
 - Funds: The local bodies cannot even meet routine functions because the proceeds of various taxes are not available to them as they form part of the Consolidated Fund of the State.
 - Functionaries: There is a capacity deficit among the personnel and elected functionaries due to lack of capacity building.

- Limited powers
 - Proper assignment of powers is missing.
- Financial dependency -
 - Limited taxation powers.
 - High dependence for funding from the state legislature.
 - Inadequate funds.
- The practice of unfair means is in the election process
- Advantages of local self government system
 - Ground level implementation
 - Democratic Decentralisation through the election of 30 lakh representatives in panchayats alone (as per Devolution Index Report 2013-14 of IIPA).
 - Voice to the marginalized and vulnerable sections of the society through reservations for women, SCs and STs.
 - Effective public service delivery as per the needs of the local population through LSG allows for a bottom-up approach. Example- MGNREGA.
- Measures to improve
 - Recommendations of 2nd ARC
 - Clear definition of functions for each level of local government in case of each subject matter.
 - State Finance Commissions should evolve objective and transparent norms for devolution and distribution of funds.
 - Capacity building efforts must attend to both the organisation building requirements as also the professional and skills upgradation of individuals associated with these bodies.
 - Putting in place a well-delineated activity mapping for LSGs.
 - Increased Autonomy

At present autonomy for governance is provided for 5th and 6th schedule states. By extending this provision to other states, more accountability for administration's actions can be provided.
 - Check dummy candidacy

In most of the local bodies dummy candidates are elected so that their family

members can dominate the local politics. This will violate the idea behind introducing reservation in local administration and needs steps to counter.

Conclusion

- Local self governance has been one of the major steps for greater administrative penetration in India. Even though it has not fulfilled all its ideas, still it cannot be termed a failure due to its importance in rural areas.
-