



Daily Mains Answer Writing (Day - 46)

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Discuss the role of Rajya Sabha in Parliamentary System. Examine the issues surrounding its functions.

'The Council of States' is the second chamber of Indian parliament, intended to play certain role as a permanent house and offers a degree of continuity in the underlying policies of laws passed by Parliament.

- It acts as a means to institutionalise the federal principle of power sharing between centre and states, and also acts as a Safety Valve of India's Federal Polity thus easing the federal tensions.
- It also plays the role of a deliberative body which enables the members to debate major issue of Public importance and thus balances the 'fickleness and passion' of Lok Sabha.

However, in the recent times, many issues have come up, questioning the functions of Rajya Sabha such as –

1. **Bypassing the Rajya Sabha** - Ordinary Bills being presented in the form of Money Bill. Example Aadhar Bill and other bills are passed with a Voice vote even when there no clear-cut distinction of majority in favour. Example - Farm Laws.
2. **No Equal Representation of States** - No. of seats allocated in Rajya Sabha to Uttar Pradesh alone is significantly higher than that of combined north-eastern states.
3. **Undermining the Federal character of Rajya Sabha** - the seats in the Rajya Sabha have been used by the ruling party to get their defeated candidate in Lok Sabha, elected in Rajya Sabha.
4. **Low Participation of Nominated Members** - Example Sachin Tendulkar during his term attended the session for a meagre 24 days.

Therefore, the steps that can be taken to strengthen the functioning of Rajya Sabha are –

- Directly appointing the members of the Rajya Sabha - will reduce cronyism and patronage appointments.
- Federal Arrangement wherein there is equal representation of each state.
- Certain rules and procedure for Nominated members so that they also add to the efficacy of Rajya Sabha.

Rajya Sabha since its inception has remained a 'vanguard for political and social values', and flag bearer of Parliamentary ethos, therefore today efforts needs to be made to enable Rajya Sabha to retain its significant role in Indian democracy.

Source of the article - https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the_need-for-a-second-chamber/article315600