

1. Examine the composition, mandate and significance of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

Introduction:

Cabinet Committees are organizations, which are instrumental in reducing the workload of the Cabinet. These committees are extra-constitutional in nature and are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution. However, the Rules of Business provide for their establishment. These rules emerge out of Article 77(3) of the Constitution.

Body:

The Prime Minister constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them. He can add or reduce the number of committees.

CABINET COMMITTEE ON SECURITY

Composition

- Prime Minister (Chairman)
- Minister of Home Affairs
- Minister of External Affairs
- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Defence

Mandate

- To deal with all defence related issues.
- To deal with issues relating to law and order and internal security.
- To deal with policy matters concerning foreign affairs that have internal or external security implications including cases relating to agreements with other countries on security-related issues.
- To deal with economic and political issues impinging on national security.
- To review the manpower requirements relating to national security and setting up new structures to deal with security-related issues.
- To consider all cases involving capital expenditure of more than Rs.1000 crore in respect of Department of Defence Production, Department of Defence Research and Development.

- All matters relating to atomic energy.
- To consider cases of increase in the firmed up cost estimates or revised cost estimates.

Significance

- The Cabinet Committee on security reduces the burden on Cabinet by enabling collective decisions to be taken by a smaller group of ministers.
- It is the supreme decision-making body in the government dealing with issues relating to law and order, internal security and policy matters concerning foreign affairs with internal or external security implications.

Examples:

- India has withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation status granted to Pakistan following the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir.
- CCS has approved setting up of Defence Space Research Organisation, which has been entrusted with task of creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies.
- Defence Procurement decisions such as purchasing modern aircrafts (Rafael deal), advanced warships etc.
- Reviewed the progress in operationalising of India's nuclear doctrine

Conclusion:

The decisions taken by the Cabinet Committees are fundamental to the governance of the country and form the basis of policy formulation as also for evaluating the impact of programmes, policies, plans, projects and schemes of the Government. Therefore, it facilitates decision making at the highest level of government.

2. Government is the largest litigant in the courts. What measures can be taken to reduce litigations involving the government?

Introduction

As per various studies, almost half of all litigations in the Indian judiciary today are government litigations. This issue has been raised by the Law Commission of India in its 126th Report in 1988, the Supreme Court of India and even by the Prime Minister of India.

Body

- Much of this government litigation is in the form of appeals where about 95 per cent of the appeals fail and are such that shouldn't have been made in the first place.
- Most cases are not where government is a compulsive litigant but where the government is a respondent. As per a Legal Policy report on the Supreme Court, only 7.4% of fresh cases filed before the court in 2014 were by the Central government.
- The writ jurisdiction vested in High Courts under Article 226 of the Constitution enables an ordinary citizen to access the highest court in her State to address grievances against any authority, including any government, for violation of any of her fundamental or other rights.
- Data for the year 2016 show that writ petitions constitute nearly 60% of all fresh cases filed before the Karnataka High Court, out of which nearly 80% of them are filed against the State Government or related agencies.

Drawbacks:

- Government litigation crowds out the private citizen from the court system.
- It adds to the woes of already overburdened judiciary.

Measures:

- Reduction in cases- One way of reducing the load on courts is to reduce the quantum of cases that come to the courts by strengthening the internal monitoring process, e.g. whether appeal should be made or not, dropping petty cases, etc.
- Alternate Dispute Redressal mechanism- For cases like traffic rules violation, theft and other petty crimes, to solve them without bringing them in the purview of judiciary.
- Internal dispute resolution- To reduce writ petitions filed by workers in government agencies against their management.
- Reforming quasi-judicial authorities- Appeals against orders of quasi-judicial authorities can be reduced by appointing judicially trained person or creating a separate class of judicial officers to discharge quasi-judicial functions in those authorities.
- Co-ordination and information sharing- Cases involving different departments are scattered at different places in physical files. These must be streamlined at one place for better information processing and fast tracking the litigation.
- Checks and balances for advocates- Ensuring cases are not unnecessarily extended and making sure advocates are paid on time.
- Enforcement of laws- For example, strict action against corruption cases should be taken at the government level so that there is least involvement of judiciary.
- Clarity on laws- There are a number of vague or contradictory laws, because of which whatever action is taken by Government, it is dragged into the court by one or the other. There is a need of clarity in the laws.

- Modifications in National Litigation Policy (2010)- Clarity of objectives, defining roles of different functionaries involved, setting minimum standards before taking litigation forward, accountability mechanisms and provision for penalties etc. must be taken care of.

Benefits

- Reduces the burden on the public exchequer arising due to these cases.
- Will assist in reducing the burden of pending cases on the judiciary.
- Make the government an efficient and responsible litigant.

Conclusion

Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS) is an excellent initiative in this regard, and must be implemented soon across all government departments to make government litigation more efficient.

3. How far caste based pressure groups has altered the polity in India? Illustrate with the help of suitable examples.

Introduction:

Pressure groups are a voluntary organization of civil society that actively pursues interest and objective based policies to be discussed and implemented by the government. Caste based pressure groups arise from a particular caste and influence government policies in favor of their social and political demands.

Body:

Caste system, being a vital inherent feature of Indian society provides a fertile and a strong foundation for pressure group activities influencing the polity of India:

- Pre-independence PGs helped in ensuring upliftment and emancipation of backward/depressed classes eventually leading to affirmative policies and introduction of reservation in education, employment, seats in parliament etc. Ex: Harijan Sevak Sangh born out of the historic Poona Pact between Dr. BR Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi.
- Legislative measures for empowerment of the lower castes: Article 17 for the abolition of untouchability, several fundamental rights and DPSPs like Article 15, Article 46, Article 335 for claims to services and posts etc.
- Creation of caste based development corporations: National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC), Dr. BR Ambedkar Development Corporation by Government of Karnataka etc.
- Political empowerment: Increasing caste based representation, participatory assertion and subsequent political steps taken. Ex: Marwari Association in Rajasthan.

- Strengthening the democratic nature and inclusive governance: With the marginalized sections' increasing participation through PG mobilization, awareness and exercise of their rights, they are encouraged into the mainstream effectively.
- Increasing self-identity/Preservation of ethos and cultural importance: Ex: Celebration of Bhima-Koregaon battle by Dalits.
- Paved way for the representation at national and regional political landscape. Ex: Political parties like BSP whose political origin is traced back to caste based PGs.

However, there have been some counter-effects by the activities of caste based PGs:

- Caste based violence: Riots and unpleasant clashes with other castes, sometimes ending in death or serious consequences. Ex: Clashes between upper castes and the Mahars on the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Bhima Koregaon.
- Fragmentation of society and enhanced caste consciousness: Creation of favor in own interests and animosity between different sections of people. Ex: Lingayat Sect in Karnataka.
- Assertions: There is revival of caste based politics in new form through caste assertions to gain political space thereby creating new wedge in society.
- Identity politics: Politicians seem to take advantage through caste appeasement and neglect the actual needs and policies required for upliftment, often agreeing to illegitimate and parochial demands. Ex: Reservation to upper and well off castes in Gujarat, Maharashtra etc. when they do not meet criteria of social or educational backward classes.

Conclusion:

In a democratic nation like India, Pressure groups provide an informal means to meet and serve needs of different classes and sections of society. However, pursuit of illogical and unnecessary demands should not override affirmative action to ensure a vibrant and inclusive polity especially as seen in the recent elections that have shown a positive direction in the sphere of exercising voting rights by citizens of India based on growth and development rather than caste based results in many places.

4. The existing number of ministries in the central and state governments doesn't augur well with the philosophy of 'minimum government, maximum governance'. Comment.

Introduction:

The Government consists of a number of Ministries/Departments, number and character varying from time to time on factors such as the volume of work, the importance attached to certain items, changes of orientation, political expediency, etc.

Body:

For decades, we have had extraordinarily large governments while ironically the quality of governance has been quite poor. There has been more attention paid to the size of the government and not so much to its quality

As per the Constitution, the total number of Union ministers, including the Prime Minister shall not exceed 15 per cent of the number of members in the LS. (Similar for State Governments)

Reasons for More number of ministries:

- Dedicated attention required to a particular sector. Ex Ministry of Skill.
- For better work distribution and increased efficiency of the government.
- Better accountability of concern ministers with the related subject or sector.
- Decentralization of work to look into sector specific development.
- Some vulnerable sections of society need extra and dedicated attention of government. Ex. Women, Child, Minority, Tribes etc.
- With new advancements new sectors are emerging. Ex.

Other political reasons for doing so:

- Before and after election coalition promises: Ministries became vehicles of political patronage in coalition politics.
- Need to accommodate MPs from different regions and states to give sense of inclusivity.
- Caste and religion representation also play an important role in India, where people don't cast their vote but vote their caste.

Negatives of more number of ministries:

- Unnecessary creation of new ministries to accommodate MPs who are incompetent to hold the post, but government needs to do that under obligation of coalition.
- Reduced efficiency of administration as decision making process gets delay.
- Increased red-tape: Multiple approvals required for any project falling under more than one ministry.
- It also creates more avenues for corruption for ministers.
- The increased cost of maintenance of ministries and associated office and employees.
- Hindrance for ease of doing business as clearances from different ministries is required for any new project.

Way forward for Minimum government and maximum Governance:

a. The merger of ministries: In order to ensure better implementation of policies and coordination, we should merge similar and complementary ministries into one. This will allow policymakers to frame holistic and comprehensive policies on the one hand and ensure smooth implementation on the other. For Example:

- Currently, three ministries in the energy sector—power, petroleum and natural gas, and renewable energy can be fused into a single ministry. The recent problem of power plants being built without proper coal supplies could have been avoided if the policy had been handled by one minister.
- Similarly integrate the aviation, railways, roads, and shipping ministries so that the country gets an integrated transport strategy rather than the current mess.
- Can bring pharmaceutical department and Ayush Ministry under the health ministry.

b. Several ministries, which are irrelevant now, can safely be shut down while some of their tasks can be handed over to independent regulators. For Example:

- Ministry of information and broadcasting.
- Ministry of culture.
- Ministry of heavy industries.
- Ministry for at micro, small and medium enterprises.

c. Set up technocratic missions that have very specific Projects which can be best dealt through commissions. Ex. The mission for cleaning the Ganga, building new cities, setting up high-speed rail links.

d. Less number of ministries will help state governments save a lot of money which can be utilized for developmental projects and better governance measures.

Conclusion:

Creation of umbrella ministries like Jal Shakti and housing and urban affairs ministry by the government is a good step in the right direction. Similarly, coordination among different ministries and reduced red-tapism is the need of the hour for achieving “minimum government and Maximum governance”.

5. There have been multiple instances where in women been able to mobilize themselves as pressure groups. Can you recall such instances? Also bring out their significance.

Introduction

Pressure groups are forms of organizations, which exert pressure on the political or administrative system of a country to extract benefits out of it and to advance their own interests. They pursue their interests by organizing themselves and by influencing the governmental policies.

Body

List of pressure groups in India:

- **Gulabi gang:** Sampatlal devi started a society called the Gulabi Gang with a group of women from her village to fight various forms of social injustice. This developed into an organized women's movement with tens of thousands of members spread over several districts in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Nirbhaya vahini:** Nirbhaya Vahini is a volunteer unit of the Honour for Women National Campaign founded by Manasi Pradhan. It helps to mobilize public opinion and launch a sustained campaign for the implementation of the movement's Four-Point charter of demand such as ban on liquor trade, self-defence training for girls, special protection for women security in every district, and Fast-track court and special investigating & prosecuting wing in every district.
- **The RAHI Foundation (Recovering and Healing from Incest):** This specializes in working with adult women survivors of incest and childhood sexual abuse and offers services that are uniquely important to their recovery process located in Delhi.
- **Sabala:** This focus on the "empowerment of women", including the tribal Lambani, through enabling financial freedom, political voice, social acceptance, and educational opportunities, located in Bijapur, Karnataka.
- **Sanlaap:** Sanlaap is a developmental organization that works towards correction of social imbalances which present themselves as gender injustice and violence against women and children. The primary work is focused against trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and forced prostitution located in Kolkata.

List of pressure groups in world:

- **Equality Now (United States):** The organization lists its primary concerns as being sexual violence, trafficking of women, female genital mutilation and discrimination in law.
- **WASH United: WASH (WATER, Sanitation and Hygiene) United (Berlin):** It is a non-profit organization that works to end the global sanitation and hygiene crisis by making toilets and good hygiene.
- **Women for Women International (WfWI) (Washington):** It is a non-profit humanitarian organization that provides practical and moral support to women survivors of war.
- **Orchid project (London):** Persistent cultural traditions endorse the practice of female genital cutting (FGC), which involves the removal of external female genitalia. Risky, unnecessary, and invasive, the tradition is being challenged by Orchid Project, which aims to end the practice by circulating educational information.

- Centre for reproductive rights (New York): It is a global legal advocacy organization that seeks to advance reproductive rights, such as abortion.

Significance:

- Global distribution: Pressure group operates at various levels like local, regional, national and international level. They can be non-profit and volunteer organization. Due to its global presence, they are able to mobilizing women and exerting pressure on the authority to bring about changes in areas of their interests.
- Chance to be heard: Pressure groups enable particular interests and cause to be heard and to exert influence in public decision and decision-making.
- Raising voices: They help in raising voices and bring to the public, issues affecting them. Several cases of sexual abuse, rape, acid attacks, genetic mutilation, women are being spoken about and consensus is built to fight against those across the globe.
- Rural participation: Because of these pressure groups, even rural women are coming to mainstream and asserting their rights and fighting for their due share be it equal wages, political representation at village level etc.
- Fight for Basic needs: Pressure groups led by women have been focusing more on providing basic rights like education, health, human rights as these are primary concerns.
- Women empowerment: They have played a major role in empowering women in areas like micro financing, employment, Shelter, etc.
- Diversified interests: They work on social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and humanitarian issues across the world.

Conclusion

There is a need for women to organize themselves as pressure groups to be able to carve a niche in all sectors of the society and fight for their needs.