Polity & Governance · GS - II

“The Central Administration Tribunal which was established for redressal of grievances and complaints by or against central government employees, nowadays is exercising its powers as an independent judicial authority.” Explain.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Central Administrative Tribunal; Article 323A; Administrative Tribunals Act 1985; service disputes; judicial independence; judicial review; specialised adjudication; procedural efficiency; accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) was established under Article 323A of the Constitution through the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985. It provides specialised adjudication of recruitment and service-related disputes involving covered central government employees and other notified categories.

Evolution into a Judicial Authority

- **Specialised jurisdiction:** CAT adjudicates matters concerning recruitment and service conditions, including promotion, seniority and disciplinary action.
- **Independent adjudication:** Its judicial members apply legal principles and decide disputes through adjudicatory proceedings rather than administrative discretion.

- **Procedural flexibility:** It follows a relatively flexible procedure compared with ordinary civil courts, facilitating specialised and potentially quicker dispute resolution.
- **Judicial safeguards:** Decisions must comply with constitutional principles of fairness, natural justice and equality.
- **Judicial review:** In *L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India* (1997), the Supreme Court held that tribunal decisions remain subject to scrutiny by the jurisdictional High Courts under Articles 226 and 227.

Limitations

Vacancies, delays, infrastructure constraints and concerns over appointments can affect its effectiveness. Moreover, CAT cannot be treated as wholly outside the constitutional judicial system because its decisions remain subject to High Court review.

Conclusion

CAT has evolved into a specialised judicial forum rather than merely an administrative grievance mechanism. Its independence and effectiveness depend on impartial appointments, adequate resources and respect for constitutional judicial review.

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