Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Presiding Officers are custodians of legislative procedure, dignity and fairness; their neutrality determines whether debate remains orderly, opposition receives space and parliamentary institutions retain public legitimacy.

Model Answer

Introduction

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Chairman of the Legislative Council occupy pivotal positions in state legislatures. Their conduct directly influences the quality of legislative democracy.

Body

Maintaining Order

The Presiding Officer interprets and enforces rules of procedure, regulates debates, maintains decorum and can direct members to withdraw unparliamentary conduct.

Ensuring Impartiality

The Chair must provide reasonable opportunity to both Treasury and Opposition benches, regulate speaking time fairly and ensure that legislative business follows established procedures.

Facilitating Democratic Practices

Protecting opposition: The Chair must ensure that dissent and scrutiny receive adequate space.

Committee functioning: Presiding Officers facilitate effective legislative committees, which enable detailed examination of bills, expenditure and government functioning.

Anti-defection role: Under the Tenth Schedule, the Presiding Officer has an important adjudicatory responsibility concerning disqualification petitions.

Financial procedure: The Speaker plays an important role in financial and legislative proceedings, including certification of Money Bills in the Assembly.

Challenges

Allegations of partisan conduct, delays in deciding disqualification petitions, disruptions and declining legislative deliberation can undermine public confidence.

Conclusion

Presiding Officers must rise above party interests and function as **guardians of the legislature rather than representatives of the ruling party**. Procedural neutrality, timely decisions and respect for dissent are essential for robust state-level democracy.