Polity & Governance · GS - II

Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a ‘useless stepney tyre’ to the most useful supporting organ in past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas in which this transformation could be visible.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2020	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Council of States; federal representation; legislative scrutiny; committee system; continuity; deliberative democracy; special constitutional powers; executive accountability; party politics; parliamentary disruptions

Model Answer

Introduction

Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of Parliament, was designed to represent states and provide legislative continuity. Its importance has grown as legislation and governance have become more complex, making detailed scrutiny and deliberation increasingly necessary.

Factors behind its growing importance

- **Federal representation:** It provides states and Union Territories representation at the Union level, allowing regional concerns to enter national debates.
- **Continuity:** As a permanent House, with one-third of its members retiring every two years, it preserves institutional experience despite changes in the Lok Sabha.
- **Legislative scrutiny:** Debates and parliamentary committees allow closer examination of bills, including technical and administrative implications.

- **Executive accountability:** Question Hour, discussions and other parliamentary procedures enable members to scrutinise government actions.
- **Political diversity:** Members with varied regional, professional and ideological backgrounds can broaden legislative debate.
- **Special constitutional powers:** Under Articles 249 and 312, Rajya Sabha can authorise Parliament to legislate on specified State List matters in the national interest and approve the creation of All India Services.

Areas where transformation is visible

Rajya Sabha's deliberative role is particularly important in examining complex legislation, discussing federal issues and reviewing government policy. Its committees can improve legislative quality by considering expert evidence and stakeholder concerns.

Continuing limitations

Party polarisation, disruptions, inadequate attendance and the use of the House primarily for political confrontation can reduce its effectiveness. Its indirect election also creates a different representative relationship from that of the directly elected Lok Sabha.

Conclusion

Rajya Sabha has become an important forum for federal deliberation, legislative scrutiny and continuity. Its contribution depends on constructive debate, effective committees and a willingness among political parties to prioritise parliamentary responsibility over partisan obstruction.

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