## The Hindu News Analysis – 26th September 2020 – Shankar IAS Academy

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* C – Chennai; B – Bengaluru; D – Delhi; H – Hyderabad; T – Thiruvananthapuram
Parliamentary scrutiny on the back burner

Data show that the government is losing sight of Parliament’s primary role—discussion and reconsideration

When the government introduces a new Bill, it is essentially asking the legislature to undertake a primary role—discussion and reconsideration. This is a fundamental aspect of the legislative process in any democracy. However, recent data suggest that the government may be losing sight of this important role.

Committees systems
The committee system is a vital tool in any parliamentary system. It allows for a more in-depth examination of legislation before it is passed into law. However, data show that the number of committees is declining, and the number of bills referred to committees is also decreasing. This could mean that important issues are being dealt with in a rushed manner without adequate scrutiny.

Parliament’s role in policy making
Parliament’s role in shaping policy is crucial. It provides a platform for politicians to debate and discuss the issues that affect the country. However, data show that the government is increasingly resorting to executive action and bypassing Parliament. This could undermine the democratic process.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the government needs to refocus on its role in Parliament. It should ensure that the legislative process is robust and that Parliament’s essential role in discussion and reconsideration is maintained. This will help to ensure that the country’s laws are made in a democratic and transparent manner.

Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I - (200 marks)

- Indian Polity and Governance - Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-III

General Studies- II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations

- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation
- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance, applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.
Parliamentary Committees

• Purpose
  ✓ Vigilance on the part of the Legislature over the actions of Executive - Oversight of the executive.
  ✓ Shares the over-burdening heavy volume of work of Parliament.

• Advantages
  ✓ Provide expertise on the matter referred to them.
  ✓ Vital role in the Parliamentary System - vibrant link between the Parliament, Executive and general public.
  ✓ Prevents the misuse of power by the Executive.
  ✓ Ensures accountability of the government.

• Two kinds – Standing Committees and Ad hoc Committees.

• Financial Committees
  ✓ Standing Committees
  ✓ Distinct group - keep an unremitting vigil over the Government spending and performance.
  ✓ Three Financial Committees -
    ➢ Committee on Estimates,
    ➢ Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) and
    ➢ Committee on Public Undertakings.

• Author
  ✓ Estimates Committee and PAC - ‘committees of scrutiny and oversight’.

Committee on Public Accounts (PAC)

• Functions
  ✓ Examine the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by the House to meet the expenditure of GOI
  ✓ Examine the annual Finance Accounts of GOI, etc.
  ✓ Examines the various Audit Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General on revenue receipts, expenditure by various ministries/Departments of Government.
  ✓ Looks upon savings arising from incorrect estimating or other defects in procedure etc.
- Any case of proved negligence resulting in loss or extravagance - PAC calls upon the concerned Ministry/Department to explain the reasons for such irregularity and action taken to prevent recurrence.

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<td>• Government showed extreme reluctance to refer Bills to the Select Committees or Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPC) on Bills.</td>
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<td>✓ Ad-hoc committees appointed to consider and report on a particular Bill.</td>
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<td>• Controversial and contentious bills and amendments - large-scale implications and popular protests against them.</td>
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<td>✓ Reason given by the govt. - pandemic and urgent need to enact safety measures to safeguard the economy.</td>
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<td>✓ Govt. is evading the primary role of Parliament and hallmarks of democratic institutions - deliberation, discussion and reconsideration.</td>
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Karnataka, T.N. spar over Mekedatu at CWMA meet
Project will affect State's rights: official

T. RAMAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI

The Cauvery Water Management Authority's (CWMA) meeting on Friday saw a sharp exchange of words between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the Mekedatu dam project.

Though the matter was not on the agenda, Karnataka, at the last of an hour-long meeting held through video-conferencing, urged the Centre to clear the Mekedatu project, which would be a balancing reservoir, fulfilling the drinking water requirements of the Bengaluru metropolitan region. But Tamil Nadu, represented by Principal Secretary (Public Works) K. Manivasan, opposed the demand, as the project would "adversely affect" its rights.

Karnataka, in its pre-feasibility report prepared in 2019, stated that the project would "regulate the required quantum of water to Tamil Nadu, on a monthly basis (in a normal year)" as per the final award of the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal, as modified by the Supreme Court in 2018.

Karnataka, T.N. spar over Mekedatu at CWMA meet

But Tamil Nadu was of the view that a mere perusal of data on Cauvery water realisation at its end since the 1990s would reveal that it, being a lower riparian State, did not get its share as per the schedule laid down earlier by the tribunal and now, by the Supreme Court and the CWMA.

The State, as a matter of principle, was opposed to any project being proposed in the upper riparian, unless approved by the Supreme Court.

At the meeting, Karnataka sought to equate the Mekedatu project with the Sarabanga Lift Irrigation Project, which envisaged the diversion of excess water from the Mettur dam.

But Tamil Nadu's response was that the Sarabanga project, utilising only the surplus water, would benefit the area that fell under the existing aycut, located within Tamil Nadu's part of the Cauvery basin.

At the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court, early last month, the State government had stated that the proposed project was not for developing a new aycut.

Besides, one of the factors behind the State's apprehensions regarding Mekedatu has been its proposed capacity of 67 thousand million cubic feet (tmc) - it was more than two-thirds the capacity of the Mettur dam, a senior official in the Public Works Department said.

"Incidental discussion"

In a chat with The Hindu, R.K. Jain, chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC) and part-time chief of the CWMA, sought to downplay the exchange between the two States and termed the discussion "incidental". He, however, added that so long as the CWMA cleared the Mekedatu project, the CWC would not be able to give its nod.

Efforts for consensus

In light of the advice rendered last year by the Expert Appraisal Committee for River Valley and Hydroelectric Projects, attached to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, for an "amicable solution" between the two States on the issue, Mr. Jain said that efforts were on to bring about a consensus between the States.

River Cauvery

- Origin: Brahmagiri range, Western ghats in Kerala – Karnataka border in Coorg district of Karnataka.
- Tributaries
  - Kabini: Flows from Kerala to Karnataka and joins Cauvery.
  - In Tamil Nadu: Bhavani, Amaravathi and Noyil
- Geography of Cauvery: Upper hilly catchment lies in Karnataka and Kerala and lower part in the plains of the Tamil Nadu meets at Hogenekal falls.

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Timeline of dispute

- 1892 and 1924 permanent interstate agreements.
- Karnataka constructed 4 new dams across Harangi, Kabini, Hemavathi and Suvarnavathy.
- 1969: TN appealed to the then PM to adjudicate the dispute.
- 1990: Centre constituted Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal under Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
  - Purpose: Adjudicate the water dispute among Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and UT of Puducherry.
- 2007: Tribunal’s report challenged in SC.
- 2018: SC directed the Centre to frame a scheme to implement the modified Tribunal Award.
- June 2018: Centre notified the Cauvery Water Management Scheme.
- Constituted Cauvery Water Management Authority and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.

Mekedatu Project

- Aims to construct a balancing reservoir across Cauvery.
- Objectives
  - To utilize additional 4.75 Thousand Million Cubic Feet of water to provide drinking water facility to Bengaluru Metropolitan Region.
  - Regulate the required quantum of water to TN based on the modified Tribunal’s report.
  - Store the flood waters that may escape into sea.
  - To harness 400 MW of renewable energy in a year.

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<td>Ravi and Beas</td>
<td>Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan</td>
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<td>Krishna</td>
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Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I - (200 marks)

- Current events of national and international importance.
- Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-IV

General Studies-III: Economic Development, Bio diversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management

- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.
- Government Budgeting.

Sources of Revenue

- Tax
- Fee
- Cess
- Surcharge
- Regulatory Fee
- Compensatory Fee
- Cess Tax
- Cess Fee

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Cess
• A temporary levy imposed to achieve a specific objective.
• Once objective achieved, it may be withdrawn.
• Imposed on both direct and indirect taxes.

• **Cess taxes** - For earmarked purpose; does not give the tax-payer an entitlement to a quid pro quo benefit.
• Credited into the Consolidated Fund of India.

**Government Accounts**

- Consolidated Fund Of India
- Public Account Of India
- Contingency Fund Of India
- Article 266(1)
- Article 266(2)
- Article 267
- All revenues received by the Government
- All public money received
- To meet any unforeseen expenditure

**Cess Fee** – Has an earmarked purpose and entitle the payer to a direct reciprocal benefit.

Cess – Levied as a percentage of existing tax amount or as a percentage of value of goods and service.

**Surcharge**
• Tax on tax.
• Imposed on incomes to reduce inequality and make the tax structure, more progressive.
• Levied as a % on existing tax amount; without any specific purpose.
• Proceeds of both cess and surcharge are not shared with states.
Habitat loss puts lion-tailed macaque on IUCN’s endangered list for sixth time

Their population is likely to decline by over 20% in the next 25 years: report

WILSON THOMAS

The lion-tailed macaque (Macaca silenus), a primate endemic to small and severely fragmented rainforests of the Western Ghats in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, continues to be in the ‘endangered’ category on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

The latest conservation status of the primate was updated in the IUCN database recently, based on technical reports over the years from a group of researchers, including Sreeva Singh of University of Mysore, Ajith Kumar of the Centre for Wildlife Studies, and Hemanth N. Karmarkar of the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History.

According to a technical report, the total wild population of lion-tailed macaque could be about 4,000 individuals, consisting of less than 2,000 mature individuals, made up of 47 isolated sub-populations in seven locations in the three states. The population is expected to suffer a decline of over 20% in the next 25 years owing to varied reasons, including hunting, road kills and habitat loss, it said. Though the conservation status of lion-tailed macaque had improved from ‘endangered’ in the first assessment in 1990 to ‘vulnerable’ in 1994, its status has remained ‘endangered’ since 1996.

The researchers observed that the population of the mostly shy and frugivorous primate, which prefers upper canopies of evergreen rainforests, was registering a declining trend in its home range in the Western Ghats from the Kabakad Hills in the north to Sirsi-Honnalur in the south at an altitude of 100-1,300 m.

“Fragmentation of the habitat is one of the major threats to the species. Several habitats that remain disconnected from others can be linked. There are contiguous habitats in Karnataka and Kerala. The population in the Valparai plateau of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) can also be linked to other populations. Enough research has been done on various aspects of the conservation of the primate over the last several years, and now it is the responsibility of the authorities to implement them on the ground,” says Professor Sreeva Singh of the University of Mysore.

Researchers feel that continuous monitoring is crucial to understanding the population trend for the management and protection of lion-tailed macaques in their habitat. Officials of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve are preparing to estimate the lion-tailed macaque population in Valparai in October in collaboration with the Nature Conservation Foundation.

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**Lion-tailed macaque (Macaca silenus)**

- Also known as the ‘beard ape’.
- One of the smallest macaque species in the world.

**Features:**

- Extensible pouches on its cheeks – act as food storage when feeding.
- Males define boundaries of their home ranges by calls.
- Dominant males emit loud, human-like whoops.

© Shankar IAS Academy
• Geographic range
  ✓ Endemic to small and severely fragmented rainforests of the Western Ghats in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

• Population: About 4,000 individuals with less than 2,500 mature individuals.

• Threats
  ✓ Agriculture of perennial non-timber crops and wood and pulp plantations.
  ✓ Fragmentation of habitat, logging and wood harvesting.
  ✓ Road kills, hunting and trapping.

• Population expected to suffer a decline of over 20% in the next 25 years.

• Conservation status
  ✓ Endangered category on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
  ✓ Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

International Union for Conservation of Nature
• Established in 1964- composed of both government and civil society organisations.
• Maintains a Red List of Threatened Species.
  ✓ Information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species.
News

• Insurance Regulatory & Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has listed ‘Domestic Systemically Important Insurers’ (D-SIIs) for the year 2020-21.

✓ Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)
  ➢ Formed by the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956.
  ➢ Objective: spreading life insurance much more widely and in particular to the rural areas with a view to reach all insurable persons in the country, providing them adequate financial cover at a reasonable cost.

✓ General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC)
  ➢ General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Act 2002 – changed its role an ‘Indian Reinsurer’

✓ The New India Assurance Co. Ltd.
  ➢ Multinational General Insurance Company
  ➢ Operates in 28 countries
  ➢ Headquartered – Mumbai.
Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs)

- Insurers of such size, market importance and domestic & global interconnection, whose distress or failure would cause a significant dislocation in the domestic financial system.
- Continued functioning critical for uninterrupted availability of insurance services.

- D-SIIs perceived as insurers that are ‘too big or too important to fail’ (TBTF) and have perceived expectation of government support → may amplify behaviours of risk.
  - High risk taking
  - Reduced market discipline
  - Create competitive distortions.
  - Increase the possibility of distress in future.
- D-SIIs should be subjected to additional regulatory measures to deal with the systemic risks and moral hazard issues.

• Parameters for identifying insurer
  - Size of operations in terms of total revenue, including premium underwritten and the value of assets under management;
  - Global activities across more than one jurisdiction;
  - Lack of substitutability of their products and/or operations;
  - Interconnectedness through counterparty exposure and macro-economic exposure.

- IRDAI identifies D-SIIs on an annual basis.
- D-SIIs
  - To raise their level of corporate governance and
  - To identify all relevant risk and promote a sound risk management culture.
  - Subjected to enhanced regulatory supervision.
Practice Question – Prelims

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Lion-tailed macaque is endemic to the tropical rainforests in North-Eastern India.
2. Recently, it was reclassified as ‘Critically Endangered’ on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice Question – Prelims

Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

1. It is an autonomous statutory body.
2. It regulates investment of funds by insurance companies.
3. The Union Minister of Finance is its Chairperson.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Previous Year Question – Prelims 2013

Q3. Consider the following statements -

The Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

1. Consists of not more than 25 Members of the Lok Sabha.
3. Examines the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Practice Question – Prelims

Q4. Which of the following Parliamentary Committees are the ‘Financial Committees’, that keep an unremitting vigil over Government expenditure and performance?

1. Committee on Public Accounts
2. Committee on Public Undertakings
3. Committee on Commerce
4. Committee on Estimates
5. Committee on Finance

Select the correct answer from the code given below.

(a) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 3, 4 and 5
Practice Question – Prelims
Q5. Consider the following pairs regarding interstate river disputes:

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Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
(a) 3 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Practice Question – Mains
GS-III
Q. The recent audit of Government accounts reveal that, over 40% of cess proceeds were not allocated to the purpose they have collected for. Discuss.

[10 marks, 150 words]

Practice Question – Prelims
Answers
08-09-2020
Q1. option d
Q2. option c
Q3. option b
Q4. option c
Q4. option c