Cabinet Committees

Why in news?

Recently, with the allocation of portfolios, Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and other important committees such as CCEA (Cabinet committee on economic affairs) and CCPA (Cabinet committee on political affairs) are in the news.

What is a Cabinet Committee?

- **About-** It is an essential part of the governance structure, designed to streamline decision-making processes.
- **Specialized committees**- It allows for the formation of specialized committees that focus on particular areas of political and economic significance, ensuring that decisions are made efficiently and with proper coordination.
- **Size of the committees**- It typically ranges from 3 to 8 members, with the Prime Minister or a cabinet minister often serving as the chairperson.
- **Types**-
  - Permanent committees- Political Affairs Committee, Economic Affairs Committee etc., formed on permanent basis.
  - Ad-hoc committees- It is formed to address specific issues.
- **Legal framework**- The executive operates under the Government of India Transaction of Business Rules, 1961. This mandates that the minister-in-charge of a department is responsible for disposing of all business allotted to that department.
- **Inter-Departmental concurrence**- For subjects involving more than one department, decisions require concurrence among the concerned departments.
- **Cabinet authority**- If concurrence is not achieved, decisions must be made by or under the authority of the Cabinet.
- **Article 77(3)-** The President of India shall make rules for the convenient transaction of government business and the allocation of such business among ministers.

What are the functions of cabinet committee?

- **Need-** The primary role of these committees is to handle specific fields requiring in-depth study, thereby alleviating the cabinet's workload.
- **Workload reduction-** They are institutional arrangements designed to reduce the workload of the full Cabinet by handling specific areas of governance.
- **Extra-Constitutional**- These committees are *not mentioned in the Constitution of India*, making them extra-constitutional in nature.
- **Flexibility-** Committees provide a platform for ministers from different departments to collaborate, ensuring coordinated action on critical economic and political issues.
- **Consensus building**- The flexible nature of committees allows for detailed discussions on particular issues to reach a consensus.

- **Decision-making**- Many matters are resolved at the committee level, preventing them from escalating to the full cabinet, thereby facilitating quicker decisions.
- **Time efficient**- The cabinet often accepts the decisions made by its committees, these enables speedy decision making.

What are the key cabinet committees?

- **Cabinet Committee on Appointments -** This panel makes appointments to posts of three service chiefs, Director General of Military Operations, chiefs of all Air and Army Commands. It also makes appointment to various posts.
- **Cabinet Committee on Accommodation** - It determines the guidelines or rules with regard to the allotment of government accommodation, takes a call on the allotment of government accommodation to non-eligible persons and organisations, and decides the rent to be charged from them.
- **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** - This panel is supposed to review economic trends, problems and prospects with the objective to evolve a consistent and integrated economic policy.
- **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** - This committee draws the schedule for Parliament sessions and monitors the progress of government business in Parliament.
- **Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs** - It addresses problems related to Centre-state relations and examines economic and political issues that require a wider perspective but have no internal or external security implications.
- **Cabinet Committee on Security -** It deals with issues relating to law and order and internal security and also deals with policy matters concerning foreign affairs with internal or external security implications.
- **Cabinet Committee on Investment** - It will identify key projects (investments of Rs 1000 crore or more or any other critical projects) required to be implemented on a time-bound basis.
- **Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development** - The objective is increasing the employability of the workforce for effectively meeting the emerging requirements of the economy.
- The committees on investment and employment were innovations introduced in *2019.*
- All committees except the ***Cabinet Committee on Accommodation*** and ***Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs*** are ***headed by the PM***.

Why is Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) so important?

- **Members**- With the Prime Minister helming it, the CCS has the ministers for ***Finance, Defence, Home Affairs and External Affairs*** as its members.
- **Functions-**
  - It is responsible for debates, discussions and appointments of/ in the ***national security bodies***.
  - Major decisions with respect to the significant appointments, issues of ***national security, defence expenditure of India*** are taken by CCS.
  - Besides dealing with defence related issues, the CCS also brainstorms on i***ssues relating to law and order and internal security***, and policy matters

concerning ***foreign affairs on security-related issues***.
- It also considers matters relating to ***atomic energy.***

Reference

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