Second Chamber in States

Why in news?

\n\n

Odisha’s plan calls for a national policy on the utility of a second chamber in States.

\n\n

What is Odisha's proposal?

\n\n

\n
- Odisha now wants to join the group of States that have an Upper House.
\n
- The State Cabinet has approved a 49-member Legislative Council.
\n
- It has accepted the report of a committee set up in 2015.
\n
- The committee studied the functioning of the second chamber in other States and made recommendations.
\n

\n\n

What is the Parliament's stance?

\n\n

\n
- The State Assembly has to pass a resolution for the creation of the Council, by a majority of its total membership.
\n
- Thereafter, Parliament has to enact a law to create it.
\n
- Notably, two Bills introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2013 for establishing Legislative Councils in Assam and Rajasthan are still pending.
\n
- It apparently indicates the lack of support for such a move.
\n
- A parliamentary committee that went into these Bills cleared the proposals,

but struck a cautionary note.
\n
- It wanted a national policy on having an Upper House in State legislatures to be framed by the Union government.
\n
- This is to ensure that a subsequent government in the State does not abolish it.
\n
- It also favoured a review of the provision in the law for Councils to have seats for graduates and teachers.
\n

\n\n

What are the benefits of a second chamber?

\n\n

\n
- The advantages of having a bicameral legislature are well-known.
\n
- An Upper House provides a forum for academicians and intellectuals.
\n
- They are arguably not suited for the nature of electoral politics.
\n
- In essence, it provides a mechanism for a more serious appraisal of legislation.
\n

\n\n

What are the concerns?

\n\n

\n
- If there was any real benefit, all States in the country should have a second chamber.
\n
- The fact that there are only seven such Councils suggests the lack of any real advantage.
\n
- Also, there is, clearly, the absence of a broad political consensus on the issue.
\n
- **Concerns** - The forum is likely to be used to accommodate party functionaries who fail to get elected.
\n

- This may defeat the objective of getting intellectuals into the legislature.
  \n
- There is also a question of giving graduates the privilege of being people’s representatives in a democracy.
  \n
- Today, legislatures draw their talent both from the grassroots level and the higher echelons of learning.
  \n
- There are enough numbers of doctors, teachers and other professionals in most political parties today.
  \n
- Besides, the second chamber is also an unnecessary drain on the exchequer of the state.
  \n
- It is also a restraining force against the dominance of elected majorities in legislative matters.
  \n
- Given these, Odisha’s proposal may give the country an opportunity to evolve a national consensus on Legislative Councils.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

