

1. “Political opportunism has always prevented the Rajya Sabha from fulfilling the sublime functions for which it was conceived.” Comment Critically.

Answer

Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of Parliament of India, may have negligible role in law making but has an unparalleled role in deliberating upon issues linked to each legislative process. In a democracy deliberation is as important as law making. Political parties generally send their outdated and unsuccessful members to Rajya Sabha thereby weakening the second arm of the parliament. The recent developments like the notorious practice of wooing member of other parties by leading political parties during the election of 57 persons to Rajya Sabha in June 2016 clearly show how political opportunism and partisan politics can prevent the Second Chamber from performing its integral constitutional functions as defined under parliamentary democracy in India. Seventy-decade old history tells us that though Rajya Sabha has generally played second fiddle to the Lok Sabha during the dominance of a ruling regime in both the Houses, it has also become a tough platform of resistance to majoritarian position of the Lok Sabha like in the event of Rajya Sabha’s opposition to the proposed amendment to the Land Acquisition Rehabilitation Act in 2015.

The bicameral nature of Indian Parliament, being treated as a basic structure of the Indian Constitution, can only be retained so long there is a healthy and effective second chamber. One of the basic intents of the Rajya Sabha is to give opportunity of becoming the members of Legislature to those who cannot stand the complicacies of direct elections. It also represents erudite and matured opinion of the country as it is occupied by eminent personalities various fields like arts, science, literature, social work etc.