

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q14

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.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · GS II · 15 marks · Governance and Policy

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Core demand of the question

- Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a 'useless stepney tyre' to a useful supporting organ of parliamentary democracy in recent years. How far do you agree with the statement? Give arguments and examples
- Honour the official stem's stepney-to-organ image. Use **Articles 80, 108, 110, 249** and recent House practice
- Keep the answer within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

The stepney taunt came from Money Bills, whips, and long one-party dominance.

- **Recent years made Rajya Sabha useful when the government lacked a majority there:** delay, committees, federal bargain.

Article 80 and regional parties give it a State-map role the Lok Sabha does not copy.

Article 110 certification and ordinances can still empty that role.

- **Agree in part:** supporting organ in political time, not a finished transformation.

Introduction

- **The Rajya Sabha was mocked as a stepney:** a spare wheel that never turned the car. Federal second chambers often face that taunt. In recent years it has been a real revising and delaying House on some statutes, a federal voice on others, and still a weak organ on Money Bills and party discipline. The transformation is partial, not complete.

Body**Why the 'useless stepney' image stuck**

- Permanent House, staggered six-year terms, and no confidence vote over the Council of Ministers made it look ornamental beside a dominant Lok Sabha.
- **Article 110** Money Bills shut it out of the purse; a partisan Speaker certificate can shrink its role, as the Aadhaar controversy showed.
- Whip and anti-defection in a House meant to be federal and deliberative turned many sittings into a count of party numbers, not of States.
- Early decades of Congress dominance made the second chamber an echo.

Factors that made it a more useful organ

- Hung or thin Lok Sabha majorities in some recent parliaments, and a Rajya Sabha the government did not own, forced negotiation, select committees, and delay - the classic second-chamber job.
- **Federalisation of politics:** regional parties use Rajya Sabha seats as a national platform (GST debate, land-acquisition amendments, and later farm-law politics in and around the House).
- **Article 249** and All-India Services still give the Council of States a formal federal function; GST Council did not abolish the House's say on ordinary finance and commercial Bills that are not certified as Money Bills.
- Quality of some members - domain specialists, former civil servants, and federal leaders - improved committee reports even when floor debates were raucous.
- Joint sittings (**Article 108**) remain rare; the threat and the delay power are how a second chamber becomes useful without being a rival executive.

Areas where usefulness is visible

- **Revising ordinary legislation:** amendments, return of Bills, and committee scrutiny have stopped or softened several government drafts in years when numbers were adverse.
- **Representation of States:** not equal like the US Senate, but still a map of Assemblies via **Article 80**, which matters when a national party is weak in a region.
- **Continuity:** a permanent House can debate long-cycle issues (federalism, external affairs) when the Lok Sabha is in campaign mode.

Areas where the stepney is still showing

- Money Bill route and ordinance-plus-replacement can still bypass serious Rajya Sabha consent.
- Nominated members and celebrity seats sometimes revive the ornamental charge.
- Disruptions and guillotine-style passing in chaotic sessions waste the revising function.
- **It cannot claim to be a 'Council of States' in the German Bundesrat sense:** votes are not State-government instructions.

How far to agree

- **Agree that it is no longer a decorative spare in every session:** when the Union lacks a Rajya Sabha majority, Indian parliamentary democracy actually bicameralises.
- **Disagree that the transformation is finished:** fiscal exclusion, whips, and certification games can still reduce it to a waiting room.
- **The fair statement:** Rajya Sabha is a useful supporting organ in political time; the Constitution still leaves a stepney option in the Union's hands.

Flow diagram

Stepney image -> Money Bill and whip
 Useful organ -> Revision delay committees
 Useful organ -> Regional parties Art 80
 Numbers in the House -> Useful organ
 Numbers in the House -> Stepney image

Conclusion

Rajya Sabha has moved from a lazy stepney image toward a supporting organ whenever numbers and regional parties force real revision. It remains easy to sideline on Money Bills and by whip. The statement is therefore half right: usefulness is contingent, not a completed constitutional conversion.

Facts & figures

Article 80

Council of States: elected by Assembly MLAs plus twelve nominated members.

Article 108

Joint sitting; rare, which makes delay in Rajya Sabha politically costly for the Union.

Article 110

Money Bill; Rajya Sabha can only recommend, and the Speaker's certificate is the gate.

Article 249

Rajya Sabha can, by special majority, let Parliament legislate on a State subject in the national interest.

Select / standing committees

The practical revising floor when the House is not a government echo.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/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/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com