



Civil Services Board

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Why in News

Recently, Punjab government has set up a three-member **Civil Services Board (CSB)** for transfers and postings of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers in the state.

Key Points

- **CSB:**
 - The **CSB is headed by the Chief Secretary of a state** and has senior most additional chief secretary or chairman, Board of Revenue, Financial Commissioner or an officer of equivalent rank and status as member.
 - The CSB **provides for the state to follow Centre's guidelines on giving a fixed tenure** of at **least two years** for cadre officers.
 - If anyone recommends the transfer of the officers before the completion of tenure, then the board will examine and effect it. The **final authority** in this regard is **the Chief Minister**.
- **Benefits:**
 - If the officials have a fixed tenure they **will be able to provide better administration**.
 - They will also **feel safe and try to stick to the rules** instead of pleasing political bosses.
 - Every official requires 3-6 months to get into the routine at his/her new place of posting. If they stay there for two years, it would mean **better delivery and stable tenure to people**.

- **Issues Involved:**

- If the tenure of bureaucrats is fixed, it **may create functional and administrative problems.**
 - The officers may overstep the authority and jurisdiction of the state government.
 - It may make them less answerable and accountable to legislators.
- With the fixed tenure rule, **the political executives feel their influence has been reduced to nothing**, since all the powers to examine a recommendation for a transfer lies with the CSB.
- The bureaucrats feel the urge to go to courts for effective implementation of guidelines **in letter and spirit.**

E.g. Haryana had the CSB in place but the guidelines are not followed there.

- **Background:**

- The Punjab government's notification is based on a 2014 order issued by the Central government. The order was aimed at **providing stability of tenure and checking political interference.**

Punjab is the 20th state to adopt the CSB.
- In October 2013, the **Supreme Court had also mandated minimum tenure for bureaucrats**, to insulate the bureaucracy from political interference and to put an end to frequent transfers of civil servants by political bosses.
 - Frequent and arbitrary transfers of officers before completion of a reasonable tenure on any post have always been considered as a major reason for the **declining standards of administration.**
 - IAS officers like Ashok Khemka, Durga Sakthi Nagpal and Kuldip Narayan, among others, have allegedly been victims of arbitrary suspensions and transfers.

Way Forward

- A healthy working relationship between Ministers, MPs, MLAs and civil servants is critical for good governance. Therefore, the state needs to take every stakeholder of governance in confidence.
- The state can learn from the loopholes of other states in implementing the fixed tenure rule.

Source: TH