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ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

**Evolving Chair: CDS in
India**

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EVOLVING CHAIR: CDS IN INDIA

In Context

- New posts at the higher level are being envisaged to enable the **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** to realise the larger objective of enhancing jointness (the sharing of domain expertise and assets) and improving composite combat capability.

Background

- Lack of an appropriate degree of jointness among the three armed forces has long been identified as a structural constraint that needed redress .
- The Kargil Review Committee, headed by **Shri K Subrahmanyam in 1999** had recommended a comprehensive review of the National Security framework for improved decision-making in defence matters.
 - ♦ Based on the Shri K Subrahmanyam Committee Report, a Group of Ministers (GoM) in 2001 recommended creation of the **post of the Chief of Defence Staff**.

About Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- The Cabinet Committee on Security in December 2019 took the historic decision to create the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to enhance the quality of Military Advice to Political Leadership through integration of Service inputs.
- CDS is the **Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee** and acts as the Principal Military Adviser to Raksha Mantri on all tri-services matters so as to provide impartial advice to the political leadership
- The CDS is the first among equals along with the other three service chiefs as a four-star general
 - ♦ Former Chief of the Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat was appointed as the country's first Chief of Defence Staff on 31st December 2019

Objectives

- It was to enable an enhancement in overall combat efficiency across the board and prepare for new emergencies that will be shaped by the techno-strategic churn that is now taking place.
- It aimed to ensure "jointness" of the three services in operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance.
- The move was aimed to develop and foster expertise in defence matters for better and more informed decision making.

Global Scenario

- Many major countries of the world have created the post of the Chief of Defence Staff to bring more Jointness and Integration in their Armed Forces. These include Italy, France, China, UK, USA, Canada and Japan.

Issues and Concerns

- The government took nine months to appoint a new CDS when CDS Bipin Rawat died in chopper crash
 - ♦ The arbitrary changes which expanded the pool of eligible candidates for appointment as CDS may have diminished the dignity of the evolving office.
- All three services also have concerns about how theaterisation might dilute the role of the service chiefs
- The challenges to national security and sovereignty remain abiding and tenacious. for example
 - ♦ There is two-front operational tasking along the land borders (China and Pakistan) and tangled, unresolved territorial disputes.
 - ♦ They are compounded by the scourge of state-sponsored terrorism.
- The existing set of responsibilities for the CDS is a case of avoidable overload.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The evolution of the CDS as an institution should be resolute and objective and guided by abiding national security considerations.
- The military ethos requires that he (CDS) retains his professional independence and upholds his oath of allegiance to the Constitution.”
- Clarity is needed on the relationship of the Chief of Defence Staff with the Service Chiefs in operational roles and administrative duties
- Now , The Armed Forces are looking at the appointment of a Vice Chief of Defence Staff and a Deputy Chief of Defence Staff therefore , it would be desirable if the bureaucratic role could be hived off to the four-star VCDS thereby allowing the CDS to focus on his primary roles.

Mains Practice Question

- Q.** Why did the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) become necessary across the globe and India? Has the Chief of Defence Staff post improved India's combat efficiency?

