Shekatkar Committee - UPSC Notes

Committees and commissions in important domains are relevant for the UPSC exam. They fall under the GS paper II polity and governance segments largely. In this article, you can read about the recommendations of the Shekatkar Committee, which is also important from the defence perspective for the IAS exam.

Shekatkar Committee

The Shekatkar Committee was formed in 2015 by the then Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

- The Committee was chaired by Lt General D B Shekatkar (Retd.).
- The mandate of the Committee was 'to suggest measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces'.
- The Committee examined how the defence forces could be made more modern, lean and cohesive.
- The Committee had submitted its report in December 2016. The Committee made 188 recommendations, out of which the Defence Ministry sent 99 to the armed forces for implementation.
- The report has never been made public because it is in the defence sphere and making the recommendations public might not be in the interest of national security.
- The Shekatkar Committee Report is now the guiding principle for the government to implement the ongoing reforms in the defence domain and the armed forces.
- Many recommendations of the Committee have also been executed, the most prominent one being the creation of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

Shekatkar Committee Recommendations

Some of the key recommendations of the Shekatkar Committee are as follows.

- India should have a defence budget which is at least 2.5 - 3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is in light of the possible future threats.
- A Joint Services War College should be set up for the training of mid-level officers of the armed forces.
- The Military Intelligence School at Pune should be transformed into a tri-service intelligence training establishment.
- The standards for recruitment of drivers and clerical staff in the Army should be enhanced.
- The report also emphasises on optimisation of the signals establishments to include corps air support signal regiments, radio monitoring companies, composite signal regiments, air formation signal regiments, and merger of corps operating and engineering signal regiments.
- Some recommendations of the committee that are already being implemented include optimisation of signals establishments, restructuring of repair echelons, redeployment of Ordnance echelons, better use of transportation and supply echelons and animal transport units, closing down of military farms & Army postal establishments in peace locations, improvement in standards for recruiting drivers and clerical staff in the Army, increasing the efficiency of the NCC (National Cadet Corps).
- The Army has started implementing the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) model for its base workshops and ordnance depots, aiming to improve operational efficiency. Read more about this on CNA dated Jan 8, 2020.
- Know more about the Chief of Defence Staff on CNA dated August 20, 2019.