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Q. What are quasi-judicial bodies? Explain their role in the governance of the country with help of a suitable example. (150 words)

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Approach

- Begin by defining quasi-judicial bodies.
- Analyse the role of quasi-judicial bodies in the governance of the country with examples.
- Conclude by underlining the importance of quasi-judicial bodies.

Answer

A quasi-judicial body is “an organ of Government other than a Court or Legislature, which affects the rights of private parties either through adjudication or rulemaking”. It is not mandatory that a Quasi-Judicial Body has to necessarily be an organisation resembling a Court of Law. For example, the Election Commission of India is also a Quasi-Judicial Body but does not have its core functions as a Court of Law.

Some examples of Quasi-Judicial Bodies in India are Election Commission of India, National Green Tribunal, Central Information Commission (CIC), Lok Adalat etc.

Role of quasi-judicial bodies in the governance

- In the conventional judicial process, a large section of the populace for the fear of expenditure may hesitate from approaching the Courts, thus defeating the purpose of justice. Quasi-judicial bodies, on the other hand, have an overall low-cost which encourages people to seek redressal for their grievances.
- Tribunals and other such bodies do not follow any lengthy or complex procedure for submitting application or evidence etc.

- Quasi-judicial bodies while taking up specific matters, majorly help by sharing the massive workload of the Judiciary. Like the National Green Tribunal adjudicating the matters related to environment and pollution.
- Quasi-judicial bodies are accessible, free from technicalities, expeditious and proceed more rapidly and efficiently as manned by experts.

Taking the example of the Election Commission of India - its quasi-judicial powers and functions sufficiently indicate that it has adjudicatory powers quite akin to the court system. Quasi-judicial functions of the Election Commission are :

- The Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate who has failed to lodge an account of his election expenses within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
- The Commission has also the power for removing or reducing the period of such disqualification as also other disqualifications under the law.
- The Commission acts as a court for settling disputes related to granting of recognition to political parties and allotment of election symbols to them.

Quasi-judicial bodies mostly remain understaffed and burdened with the ever-increasing number of cases, because of which they find it difficult to perform their functions smoothly. The backbone of the problem lies in the fact that with half the manpower of the Judiciary, these bodies are expected to perform an almost equal amount of work. Despite such odds, Quasi-judicial bodies are a great help to the nation and have substantially decreased the burden of the Judiciary. They also enable efficient governance of the country by addressing the core issues.