

Parliamentary Committees

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Why Parliamentary Committees?

- Modern Parliament work:
 - Varied
 - Complex
 - Voluminous
 - Constraint of time
- A lot of business of Parliament transacted through Committee of the House

What are Parliamentary Committees?

1. A Committee which is
 - appointed or elected by the House
 - or
 - nominated by the Speaker and
2. which works under the direction of the Speaker
3. Presents its report to the House or to the Speaker
4. The Secretariat for the Committee is provided by the Rajya or Lok Sabha Secretariat

Types of Parliamentary Committees?

- **Two types:**
 - Standing Parliamentary Committees
 - Ad-hoc Parliamentary Committees
- **Standing Parliamentary Committee**
 - Permanent and regular committees which are constituted from time to time
 - Under an Act of Parliament or Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha
 - Work continuous in nature
 - Examples: PAC, CoPU, CoGA
- **Ad-hoc Parliamentary Committee**
 - Appointed for a specific purpose and
 - Cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report
 - Examples: Select and Joint Committees on Bills

Financial Committees

1. Estimates Committee
2. Committee of Public Undertakings
3. Public Accounts Committee

Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSC)

- Why:
 - Enormous budgetary allocations being made
 - Without adequate debate
 - Due to lack of time
 - Example: 1989 – Demands for Grants of only 3 Ministries discussed; of 34 were gullitioned
- 1993 (X Lok Sabha) Departmentally Related Parliamentary Standing Committees created covering all the Ministries
- 1993: 17 DRSC: 6 under the Chairman Rajya Sabha (RS) & 11 under the Speaker Lok Sabha (LS)
- 2004: 24 DRSCs: 8 under the Chairman RS & 16 uner the Speaker LS

DRSC: Functions

To consider and submit report on:

1. the Demands for Grants
2. Bills referred to them by the Presiding Officer of House
3. National Basic Long Term Policy Documents presented to the Houses and referred to them by the Presiding Officer of a House
4. the Annual Reports of the related Ministries/Departments

A few other issues

1. Meetings held in camera (Confidential)
2. Call for information from the Ministry through detailed questionnaire
3. Secretary (Chief Accounting Authority) invited to give oral evidence
4. May call expert or non-official witnesses
5. May conduct study visit
6. May form sub-committee(s)
7. May call for further written information post-oral evidence
8. Verbatim record of the proceedings by the Parliament Secretariat [Secretary]

A few other issues...

9. During internal discussions, non-members withdraw from the room
10. Report based on broad consensus
11. A member may give a note dissent (presented along with the report to the House)
12. Report submitted to the Presiding Officer / House
13. Contents of the report classified till it is laid on the Table of the House

Recommendations of the Committees

1. Recommendatory (Advisory) in nature [not mandatory]
2. Ministry submits Action Taken Note (ATN) to the Parliament Secretariat on the recommendations of the report
3. ATN consists of:
 1. Recommendations/observations that have been accepted by Government;
 2. Recommendations/observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply;
 3. Recommendations/observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee; and
 4. Recommendations/observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited