

## Cabinet Committees [UPSC Notes for GS II]

### Cabinet Committees

**Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, the conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.**

**Context:** Recently the central government has reconstituted eight key cabinet committees including the creation of two new committees, one on investment and growth and another on employment and skill development.

Cabinet Committees are extra-constitutional in emergence, which means, they are not mentioned in the Indian Constitution. But, the Rules of Business provide for their formation.

- They are established by the PM as per the exigencies of the time and needs of the situation. Hence, their number, nomenclature, and composition vary from time to time.
- They are of two types—standing and ad hoc. The former is of a permanent nature, while the latter is of a temporary nature.
- The ad hoc committees are formed at times to deal with special problems. They are disbanded after their job is done.

### Composition of Cabinet Committees

- Their membership varies from three to eight.
- They usually include only Cabinet Ministers.
- Non-cabinet ministers can also be included as members.
- Apart from the ministers in charge of the subjects covered, other senior ministers can also be included as members
- Such Committees are usually chaired by the PM. At times, other Cabinet ministers like Home, Finance, etc. can also be the chairperson. But, if the Prime Minister is a member of the committee, then, he or she is the head of the committee.

### Role of Cabinet Committees

- They are an organisational device to lessen the enormous workload of the Cabinet. They facilitate in-depth examination of policy issues and effective coordination. They are based on the principles of division of labour and effective delegation.
- They not only resolve issues and frame proposals for the Cabinet's consideration, but they also take decisions. The Cabinet can, of course, review their decisions.

### Difference between Cabinet Committees and Council of Ministers (COMs)

They are different from Council of Ministers as COMs is a constitutional body, dealt in detail by the Articles 74 and 75 of the Constitution, unlike cabinet committees which are extra-constitutional in emergence.

- The Council of Ministers is a wider body comprising of 60 to 70 ministers including all 3 categories of ministers, namely, cabinet ministers, ministers of state, and deputy ministers.
- COMs is vested with all powers but only in theory. It implements the decisions taken by the cabinet while Cabinet Committees help the cabinet in decision making.
- COMs is collectively responsible to the Lower House of the Parliament while there is no such clause for cabinet committees.
- Although Cabinet Committees are not constitutional bodies but their work can't be under-estimated as they provide crucial guidance to the cabinet.