

UPSC Civil Services Examination

Political Science & International Relations

Topic: Parliamentary Committees

Indian Constitution mentions two kinds of Parliamentary Committees - Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. Any subject related to these committees is dealt with Article 118 (1) of the Indian Constitution. The topic 'Parliamentary Committees' is important for IAS Exam and its three stages: - Prelims, Mains and Interview.

This article will mention in detail about Indian Parliamentary Committees including Financial Committees, Departmental Committees. Aspirants can also download the notes of Parliamentary Committees for UPSC Mains as they hold importance for GS-II paper and Political Science Optional papers.

How many types of Parliamentary Committees are there?

There are different types of parliamentary committees which are mentioned in the table below:

Parliamentary Committee in India		
Types of Committee	Categories of Committees	Sub-Categories of Committees
Standing Committees	Financial Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Accounts Committee Estimates Committee Committee on Public Undertakings
	Departmental Standing Committees	Total-24 (Read the article below to know the names of the departmental committees)
	Committees to Inquire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Petitions Committee of Privilege Ethics Committee
	Committees to Scrutinise and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Government Assurances Committee on Subordinate Legislation Committee on Papers Laid on the Table

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Welfare of SCs and STs Committee on Empowerment of Women Joint Committee on Offices of Profit
	Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Advisory Committee Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions Rules Committee Committee on Absence of Members from Sitzings of the House
	House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Purposes Committee House Committee Library Committee Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members
Ad Hoc Committees	Inquiry Committees	Read the details below
	Advisory Committees	Read the details below

Standing Committees

As given above that there are six types of standing committees in India. They are permanent in nature. The details of all of these are given below:

1. Financial Committees

There are three categories of Financial Committees:

- Public Accounts Committee - It examines the annual reports of the Government and scrutinizes the reports of Comptroller and Auditor General laid in the parliament by the President.
- Estimates Committee - It examines the estimates of the expenditure proposed by the government in the budget and suggests 'economies' in public expenditure.
- Committee on Public Undertakings- It examines the reports and accounts of public undertakings.

2. Department Standing Committees

There are a total of 24 Departmental Standing Committees: - 8 under Rajya Sabha and 16 under Lok Sabha. The list of these committees is given in the table below:

Departmental Standing Committees			
Committees under Lok Sabha		Committees under Rajya Sabha	
Name	Ministry/Department	Name	Ministry/Department
Committee on Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Food Processing Industries 	Committee on Commerce	Commerce and Industry
Committee on Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Information Technology • Information & Broadcasting 	Committee on Home Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Affairs • Development of North Eastern Region
Committee on Defence	Defence	Committee on Human Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Development • Youth Affairs and Sports
Committee on Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and Renewable Energy • Power 	Committee on Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises • Small Scale Industries • Agro and Rural Industries
Committee on External Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Affairs • Non-Resident Indians Affairs 	Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Technology • Space • Earth Sciences • Atomic Energy • Environment & Forests
Committee on Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Company Affairs • Planning • Statistics and Programme Implementation 	Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Aviation • Shipping, Road Transport and Highways • Culture • Tourism

Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution 	Committee on Health and Family Welfare	Health and Family Welfare
Committee on Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour and Employment • Textiles 	Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law and Justice • Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
Committee on Petroleum & Natural	Gas Petroleum and Natural Gas	-	-
Committee on Railways	Railways	-	-
Committee on Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Development • Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation 	-	-
Committee on Water Resources	Water Resources	-	-
Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers	Chemicals and Fertilizers	-	-
Committee on Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development • Panchayati Raj 	-	-
Committee on Coal and Steel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal and Mines • Steel 	-	-
Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Justice and Empowerment • Tribal Affairs 	-	-

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Functions of these 24 Departmental Standing Committees are:

1. They work upon the demand for grants of the concerned ministries. They don't propose any cut-motion
2. They examine the bills of concerned ministry
3. They work upon the annual reports of the ministries
4. They also consider policy documents presented the ministries before both the houses

Facts about Departmental Standing Committees:

1. They don't consider day-to-day administration
2. They generally don't intervene into matters taken up by another departmental standing committees
3. Recommendations made them are advisory in nature, hence are not binding on the Parliament

3. Committees to Inquire

There are three types:

- Committee on Petitions - Whenever there is a petition on a bill or if there is any matter of general public importance, this committee examines those.
- Committee of Privileges - If any member of the house breaches the code of it, this committee acts upon it and proposes a suitable action. It is semi-judicial in nature. In Lok Sabha it has 15 members, in Rajya Sabha, it has 10.
- Ethics Committee - If any member of the house misconducts and shows indiscipline, this committee acts upon that and decides suitable action.

4. Committees to Scrutinize and Control

There are six types of these committees which are given below:

- Committee on Government Assurance - Whenever a minister makes any promise, or assure, or take any undertaking in Lok Sabha; this committee examines the extent of such promises, assurances and undertakings carried through by him/her. It has 15 members in Lok Sabha and 10 members in Rajya Sabha
- Committee on Subordinate Legislation - It examines whether the executives are exercising well, their powers to make regulations, rules, sub-rules and bye-laws delegated by the Parliament or conferred by the Constitution. In both the houses, it comprises 15 people
- Committee on Papers laid on the table - When ministers lay any paper on the table, this committee scrutinizes the credibility of the paper and if that paper complies with the provision of the constitution. It has 15 members in Lok Sabha and 10 in Rajya Sabha.
- Committee on Welfare of SCs & STs - It consists of 30 members. 20 are taken from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha. Reports of National Commission for SCs and National Commission for STs are considered by this committee
- Committee on Empowerment of women - The report of National Commission for women is considered by this committee.
- Joint Committee on Offices of Profit - This committee examines the composition and character of committees and other bodies appointed by the Central, state and union territory governments

and recommends whether persons holding these offices should be disqualified from being elected as members of Parliament or not.

5. Committees relating to the day-to-day business of the house

There are four types of this committee mentioned below:

- Business Advisory Committee - It regulates the time-table of the house.
- Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions - It classifies bills and allocates time for the discussion on bills and resolutions introduced by private members
- Rules Committee - If there is any need of amendment in the rules of the house, this committee makes a proposal
- Committee on Absence of Members - All the leave applications, applied by the member of the houses are taken up by this committee

6. House-Keeping Committees

There are four types of this committee mentioned below:

- General Purposes Committee - Matters that do not fall under the jurisdiction of other parliamentary committees are taken up by this committee. The members of this committee comprise :
 - Presiding officer (Speaker / Chairman) as its ex-officio chairman
 - Deputy Speaker (Deputy Chairman in the case of Rajya Sabha)
 - Members of the panel of chairpersons (panel of vice-chairpersons in the case of Rajya Sabha)
 - Chairpersons of all the departmental standing committees of the House
 - Leaders of recognised parties and groups in the House and,
 - Other members as nominated by the presiding officer
- House Committee - The facilities given to the members of the houses in the name of residences, food, medical aid, etc are supervised by this committee
- Library Committee - The library of the houses and the amenities attached with it are managed by this committee

Ad-Hoc Committees

There are two types of ad-hoc committees. They are temporary in nature.

The details of these committees are given below:

1. Inquiry Committees

These committees can be proposed by either house or can also be appointed by the speaker/chairman of the respective house. Few examples of Inquiry Committees are:

- Joint Committee on Bofors Contract
- Joint Committee on Fertilizer Pricing
- Joint Committee to Enquire into Irregularities in Securities and Banking Transactions
- Joint Committee on Stock Market Scam, etc

2. Advisory Committees

These committees are select or joint committees appointed for the matters of bills. They report on particular bills. They are different from the inquiry committees as the procedure that they follow are laid down in the Rules of Procedure and also are directed by the Lok Sabha speaker or Rajya Sabha chairman.

1. Whenever a bill is introduced in either house, they refer it to the select committee which scrutinizes it clause-by-clause.

