

UPSC Preparation

Committee on Papers Laid on the Table

The practice of laying papers on the Table enforces executive accountability. It is the logical corollary of the Parliaments' inherent right to information. The government lays some important reports, agreements and other miscellaneous papers on the table with a view to making them public. In order to enforce the accountability of public undertakings, it has been made mandatory for such bodies to lay their annual reports and audited accounts on the Table of the two Houses of [Parliament](#).

It was not always possible for members to exercise vigilance in respect of all the aspects of papers laid on the Table. So there was a need to constitute a Committee on Papers Laid on the Table. There are different Committees on Papers Laid on the Table for [Rajya Sabha](#) and [Lok Sabha](#). Both the committees do not differ in functions, but they differ in the constitution of its members.

Functions of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table

The functioning of the 'Committee on Papers laid on the Table' is based on Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha and some important Reports submitted by the Committee to the House from time to time.

After a paper is laid before the Council by a Minister, the Committee shall consider the following

- Whether there has been compliance with the provisions of the Constitution or the Act of Parliament or any other law, rule or regulation in pursuance of which the paper has been so laid
- Whether there has been any unreasonable delay in laying the paper before the Council and if so,
 - Whether a statement explaining the reasons for such delay has also been laid before the Council along with the paper, and
 - Whether those reasons are satisfactory
- Whether the paper has been laid before the House both in English and Hindi and if not,
 - Whether a statement explaining the reasons for not laying the paper in Hindi has also been laid before the House along with the paper, and
 - Whether those reasons are satisfactory.
- The Committee has the power to require the evidence of persons or the production of papers or records.
- The Committee has the authority to treat any evidence tendered before it as secret or confidential.
- The Committee may undertake on-the-spot study tours of the institutions or bodies whose annual reports or audited accounts are required to be laid before the Parliament

in compliance with the provisions of the [Constitution](#), Act, Rule, Regulation, etc. or in pursuance of some recommendations of a Parliamentary Committee.

Some Important Links

Indian Parliamentary Privileges	Public Accounts Committee
Estimates Committee	Committee on Public Undertakings

Constitution of the Committee in Rajya Sabha

- The Committee on Papers laid on the Table(Rajya Sabha) was constituted for the first time on 3rd March 1982.
- It consists of ten members nominated by the Chairman.
- Its normal tenure is one year but continues to hold office until a new Committee is nominated.
- The Committee shall consist of ten members who shall be nominated by the Chairman.
- The Committee nominated under sub-rule (1) shall hold office until a new Committee is nominated.
- Casual vacancies in the Committee shall be filled by the Chairman.

Constitution of the Committee in Lok Sabha

- The Committee on Papers laid on the Table(Lok Sabha) was constituted for the first time on 01st June 1975.
- The Committee is constituted under Rule 305A of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.
- The Committee consists of 15 Members, nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.
- The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed from amongst the Members of the Committee.
- The Committee shall hold office for a term not exceeding one year.

Chairman of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table in Rajya Sabha

- The Chairman of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman(chairman of Rajya Sabha) from amongst the members of the Committee.
- If the Deputy Chairman is a member of the Committee he shall be appointed Chairman of the Committee.
- If the Chairman of the Committee is for any reason unable to act, the Chairman(chairman of Rajya Sabha) may similarly appoint another Chairman of the Committee in his place.
- If the Chairman of the Committee is absent from any meeting, the Committee Shall choose another member to act as Chairman of the Committee for that meeting.

Quorum of Committee on Papers Laid on the Table in Rajya Sabha

- In order to constitute a meeting of the Committee, the quorum shall be 5.
- The Chairman of the Committee shall not vote in the first instance but in the case of an equality of votes on any matter, he shall have, and exercise, a casting vote.

General Recommendations of the Committee

- The Committee recommends that the copies of the Annual Reports and audited accounts of the Public Undertakings established by Acts of Parliament or Government Companies incorporated under the [Companies Act, 1956](#) or Societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or any other organization/board for which annual reports, etc. are to be placed on the Table of the Houses of Parliament together with the Report/Review/Comments of the Auditor and the [CAG of India](#).
- The Committee is of the opinion that the Reports of the Public Undertakings/Companies/Societies, etc. that are laid on the Table of the House should include the following
 - Annual Report
 - Audited Accounts
 - Comments by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India wherever given
 - Review by CAG of India whenever given
 - Reply to the observations of the Auditor and to the comments and review of Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
 - Report by the Government under section 619A in respect of Government Companies and also the Review in respect of other institutions for which the Reports are laid by the Government.
 - The annual budget of the Government Company/Organisation is to be presented to Parliament.
- The documents/statements laid on the Table of the House should bear the place, date and the name of the signatory with the designation.
- The statements made and information given in the paper laid on the Table should be consistently accurate, adequate and comply with the requirements of the provisions of the Constitution/Statutes/Acts/Rules/Regulations/Resolutions/Orders/Directions.
- The Committee will treat a paper as incomplete if any requirement is not fulfilled.