

Parliamentary Committees in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

You all are familiar with Parliament as a major organ of the state dealing with law making. Parliament is also the authority to check the Executive (government). Every Executive is answerable to the Parliament. Our discussion and analysis on Parliament will be incomplete if we don't touch the Parliamentary Committees. These are committees, with MPs as members, for specialized work on behalf of the entire Parliament.

Why Parliamentary Committees?

The work done by the Parliament in modern times is considerable in volume and varied in nature. The time at its disposal is limited (Remember that our Parliament normally meets only for 3 sessions, that too only for around 100 days each year!). It cannot, therefore, give close consideration to the details of all the legislative and other matters that come up before it. Hence Parliamentary Committees are necessary for detailed study on specific matters.

Types of Parliamentary Committees

- Based on purpose and duration.
 1. Adhoc.
 2. Standing – Advisory and Enquiry.
- Based on composition.
 1. Select – Single House, ie either LS or RS.
 2. Joint – Both Houses.

-Committee Types-	Standing Committee	Adhoc Committee
Select Committee	Eg: Estimate (LS), Ethics Committee (RS)	Committees on Bills (Select)
Joint Committee	Eg : PAC	Committees on Bills (Joint)

Ad hoc Committees vs Standing Committees

Ad hoc Committees are appointed for a specific purpose and they cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report.

Examples of ad hoc committees

1. Committees on Bills (Select and Joint).
2. Railway Convention Committee.

3. Committees on the Draft Five Year Plans.
4. Hindi Equivalents Committee.

Standing Committees are permanent committees. Each House of Parliament has Standing Committees.

Examples of standing committees:

1. Business Advisory Committee.
2. Committee on Petitions.
3. Committee of Privileges.
4. Rules Committee.

How Parliament transacts its business with Parliamentary Committees?



1. When a Bill comes up before a House for general discussion, it is open to that House to refer it to a Select Committee of the House or a Joint Committee of the two Houses.
2. A motion has to be moved and adopted to this effect in the House in which the Bill comes up for consideration.
3. In case the motion adopted is for reference of the Bill to a Joint Committee, the decision is conveyed to the other House requesting them to nominate members of the other House to serve on the Committee.
4. The Select or Joint Committee considers the Bill clause by clause just as the two Houses do. Amendments can be moved to various clauses by members of the Committee.
5. The Committee can also take evidence of associations, public bodies or experts who are interested in the Bill.
6. After the Bill has thus been considered the Committee submits its report to the House.
7. Members who do not agree with the majority report may append their minutes of dissent to the report.

Also read: National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP)

Standing Committees in Lok Sabha (Select)

1. Absence of Members from the sitting of the House
2. Business Advisory Committee
3. Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes

4. Empowerment of Women
5. General Purposes Committee
6. Government Assurances
7. House Committee
8. Library Committee
9. Papers Laid on the Table
10. Petitions
11. Private Members Bills and Resolutions
12. Privileges
13. Rules Committee
14. Subordinate Legislation
15. Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Standing Committees in Rajysabha (Select)

1. Committees to enquire—

(a) Committee on Petitions; (b) Committee of Privileges; and (c) Ethics Committee.

2. Committees to scrutinise and control—

(a) Committee on Government Assurances; (b) Committee on Subordinate Legislation; and (c) Committee on Papers Laid on the Table.

3. Committees relating to day-to-day business of the House—

(a) Business Advisory Committee; and (b) Rules Committee.

4. House Keeping Committees—

(a) House Committee; (b) General Purposes Committee; and (c) Committee on Provision of Computers to Members of Rajya Sabha.

PS : The 12th committee in Rajya Sabha is Committee on Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme.

Sl. No.	Name of the Committee	No. of members in the Committee
1.	Business Advisory Committee	11
2.	Committee on Papers Laid on the Table	10
3.	Committee on Petitions	10
4.	Committee of Privileges	10
5.	Committee on Rules	16
6.	Committee on Subordinate Legislation	15
7.	Committee on Government Assurances	10
8.	General Purposes Committee	Not fixed

9.	House Committee	10
10.	Ethics Committee	10
11.	Committee on Provision of Computers for Members of Rajya Sabha	7
12.	Committee on Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme	10

Joint Standing Committees

All Department related standing committees are joint. Also two of the three Financial committees are Joint (PAC and PUC). In addition to these the below mentioned are the important joint committees in Parliament.

Also read: Presidents of India and their tenure

(a) Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. (b) Committee on Offices of Profit. (c) [Parliamentary Committee to review the rate of dividend payable by the Railway Undertaking to the General Revenues] (Railway Convention Committee). (d) Committee on Empowerment of Women. (e) Library Committee. (f) Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex. (g) Committee on Installation of Portraits/Statues of National Leaders and Parliamentarians in the Parliament House Complex. (h) Committee on Security Matters in Parliament House Complex.

Department related Standing Committees (Joint)

Out of the 24 Committees, 18 Committees are serviced by the Loksabha Secretariat and 6 Committees by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Each of these Standing Committees consists of not more than 45 members—30 to be nominated by the Speaker from amongst the members of Lok Sabha and 15 to be nominated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha from amongst the members of Rajya Sabha. A Minister is not eligible to be nominated to these Committees. The term of members of these Committees is one year.

Department Related Standing Committees (LS)

SI No.	Name of the Department Related Standing Committee (LS)
1	Committee on Agriculture
2	Committee on Chemicals & Fertilizers
3	Committee on Coal & Steel
4	Committee on Defence
5	Committee on Energy
6	Committee on External Affairs
7	Committee on Finance
8	Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs & Public Distribution
9	Committee on Information Technology

10	Committee on Labour
11	Committee on Petroleum & Natural Gas
12	Committee on Railways
13	Committee on Rural Development
14	Committee on Social Justice & Empowerment
15	Committee on Urban Development
16	Committee on Water Resources

Also read: Governor of States (Article 152-162)

Department Related Standing Committees (RS)

SI No	Name of the Department Related Standing Committee (RS)
1	Committee on Commerce
2	Committee on Health and Family Welfare
3	Committee on Home Affairs
4	Committee on Human Resource Development
5	Committee on Industry
6	Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice
7	Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests
8	Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture

Functions of Department Related Standing Committees

The newly constituted departmentally related Standing Committee System is a path-breaking endeavour of the Parliamentary surveillance over administration. With the emphasis of their functioning to concentrate on long-term plans, policies and the philosophies guiding the working of the Executive, these Committees will be in a very privileged position to provide necessary direction, guidance and inputs for broad policy formulations and in achievement of the long-term national perspective by the Executive. With reference to the Ministries/Departments under their purview, the functions of these committees are:

1. Consideration of Demands for Grants.
2. Examination of Bills referred to by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, Lok Sabha as the case may be.
3. Consideration of Annual Reports.
4. Consideration of national basic long term policy documents presented to the House and referred to the Committee by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, Lok Sabha, as the case may be.

NB: These Committees do not consider matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned Ministries/Departments.