



Role of Parliamentary Committees

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Why in News

Recently, the Government passed two agriculture Bills in Rajya Sabha. However, the Opposition protested against the fact that neither Bill had been scrutinised by a Parliamentary Committee.

Key Points

- **Parliamentary Committee:**
 - Parliament scrutinises legislative proposals (Bills) in **two ways**:
 - The **first way** is by discussing it on the floor of the two Houses. This is a legislative requirement; all Bills have to be taken up for debate.
 - The **second way** is by referring a Bill to a **Parliamentary Committee**.
 - A Parliamentary Committee **means** a committee that:
 - Is appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker/Chairman.
 - Works under the direction of the Speaker/Chairman.
 - Presents its report to the House or to the Speaker/Chairman.
 - Has a secretariat provided by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha.
- **Purpose of Parliamentary Committees:**
 - Since **Parliament meets only for 70 to 80 days in a year**, there is not enough time to discuss every Bill in detail on the floor of the House. Plus **debate in the house is mostly political** and does not go into the technical details of a legislative proposal.
 - Therefore, it **takes care of the legislative infirmity of debate** on the floor of the House. However, referring Bills to parliamentary committees is **not mandatory**.

- **Types of Parliamentary Committees:**

- India's Parliament has multiple types of committees. They can be differentiated on the basis of their work, their membership and the length of their tenure.
- However, **broadly there are two types** of Parliamentary Committees—**Standing Committees** and **Ad Hoc Committees**.

- The **Standing Committees are permanent** (constituted every year or periodically) and work on a continuous basis.

Standing Committees can be classified into the following six categories:

- Financial Committees
- **Departmental Standing Committees**
- Committees to Enquire
- Committees to Scrutinise and Control
- Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House
- House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees
- While the **Ad Hoc Committees are temporary** and cease to exist on completion of the task assigned to them.

They are further subdivided into **Inquiry Committees and Advisory Committees**.

- **Procedure:**

- There are **three broad paths** by which a Bill can reach a Parliamentary Committee.
 - The minister introducing the Bill recommends to the House that his Bill be examined by a **Select Committee (Committee of one House i.e either Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha)** of the House or a Joint Committee of both Houses.
 - The presiding officer of the House can also send a Bill to a Parliamentary Committee.
 - A Bill passed by one House can be sent by the other House to its Select Committee.
- The report of the committee is of a **recommendatory nature**. The government can choose to accept or reject its recommendations. The Committee can also suggest its own version of the Bill.

Source: IE