



Mains Practice Question

Q. Explain the structure of the Parliamentary Committee system. How far have the financial committees helped in the institutionalisation of Indian Parliament? (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Begin with a brief introduction to the parliamentary committee system in India, highlighting its significance in the functioning of the Parliament.
- Explain the type of parliamentary committees and discuss the role of financial committees.
- Conclude by expressing the importance of financial committees.

Introduction

Parliamentary Committees are a great tool devised to save the time on the floor of the Parliament and ensure the best policy formulation by taking expert opinions and spending dedicated time on matters of national interest.

Body

Types of Parliamentary Committees

- **Standing Committees:** These are permanent bodies constituted annually.
 - The 6 major types of standing committees are:
 - 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
- **Ad Hoc Committees:** These are temporary committees made for particular tasks.
 - The two categories under it are 'Inquiry Committees' and 'Advisory Committees'.

Financial Committees and Institutionalisation of Parliament

There are three distinctive financial committees, performing distinctive tasks. These committees are:

- **Estimates Committee:**
 - They assess efficiency of expenditure and suggest policy changes and are therefore referred to as continuous economy committee.
 - They ensure if the money is well laid out as per the policy requirements. They also, suggest the form in which estimates are to be presented to the Parliament.
- **Committee on Public Undertaking:**
 - They essentially assess performance of public undertakings. These ensure efficiency and autonomy of public undertakings.
 - The Committee merely has an advisory role and does not examine or investigate in day-to-

day technical matters.

▪ **The Public Accounts Committee (PAC):**

- They examine public expenditure from a technical standpoint as well as from the point of view of economy. It audits the report of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).
- It ensures financial accountability of the executive and scrutinises government schemes and projects. For example, the 2G spectrum allocation.

Conclusion

The financial committees have over the years proved to be of importance to the proper working and institutionalisation of the Parliament. The three financial committees help establish financial prudence, accountability and transparency in the financial matters of the government.

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