



## Appointment to Cabinet Committees

**For Prelims:** [Cabinet committees](#), [Lok Sabha Speaker](#), [Members of Parliament](#), [Prime Minister](#), [Standing committees](#)

**For Mains:** Challenges for [Cabinet Committees](#), Suggestions for Cabinet Committees

**Source:** [IE](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Union government constituted eight [Cabinet committees](#)**, with the **[Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs \(CCEA\)](#)** getting three new faces and the **[Appointments Committee of the Cabinet \(ACC\)](#)** and **[Cabinet Committee on Security \(CCS\)](#)** remaining unchanged.

- In another development [Lok Sabha Speaker](#) has amended the **oath-taking rules** for Members of Parliament, **prohibiting them from adding any remarks** during their oath as members of the House.

### What are Cabinet Committees?

- **About:**
  - A **[Cabinet Committee](#)** is a **subset of the [Union Cabinet](#)**, consisting of selected Union Ministers.
  - These committees are **established to streamline decision-making** by dividing responsibilities among different groups, such as those dealing with economic affairs, security, parliamentary affairs, and political affairs.
  - They provide **detailed consideration and ensure efficient handling of complex issues**, which are then presented to the full Cabinet for final approval.
  - They are based on the **principles of division of labour** and effective delegation.
- **Type:**
  - Standing (Permanent nature)
  - Ad hoc (Temporary nature to deal with special problems)
- **Features of Cabinet Committees: They are extra-constitutional in nature and the Rules of Business provide for their establishment.**
  - The executive in India works under the Government of India **Transaction of Business Rules, 1961**.
    - The rules come from **Article 77(3) of the Constitution**, which says the President makes rules for smooth government operations and assigns tasks among Ministers.
- **Membership:**
  - They are set up by the [Prime Minister](#) according to the exigencies of the time and requirements of the situation.

- Their membership varies from three to eight. They usually include only Cabinet Ministers. However, the non-cabinet Ministers are not debarred from their membership.
  - They not only include the Ministers in charge of subjects covered by them **but also include other senior Ministers.**
- In case the Prime Minister is a member of a committee, he invariably presides over it.
- They not only sort out issues and formulate proposals for the consideration of the Cabinet, but **also take decisions.** However, the **Cabinet can review their decisions.**
- **List of 8 Cabinet Committees:**
  - Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)
  - Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)
  - Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)
  - Cabinet Committee on Accommodation
  - Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (referred as Super-Cabinet)
  - Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs
  - Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth
  - Cabinet Committee on Skill, Employment and Livelihood
- **Recent Changes:**
  - The Home Minister is the **sole Cabinet member** to feature on all these panels.
  - **The Prime Minister heads all six committees** except the Committee on Accommodation and the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.
  - No change has been made in the **Appointments Committee, which is headed by the Prime Minister** and where the Home Minister is the sole member.

## Parliamentary Committees

- **Parliamentary committees** are **specialised committees** formed to handle the detailed work of the Parliament, which is **often too complex** and extensive to be conducted within the full sittings of the Houses.
- They are **essential for ensuring detailed scrutiny**, discussion, and investigation into specific matters. There are various types of parliamentary committees like **Standing Committees**, **Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)** etc.

## Groups of Ministers

- These are **ad hoc bodies formed** to give recommendations to the cabinet on **certain emergent issues and critical problem areas.**
- Some of these GoMs are **empowered to take decisions** on behalf of the Cabinet whereas the others make recommendations to the Cabinet.
  - The institution of GoMs has become a viable and effective instrument of coordination among the ministries.
- Ministers heading the concerned ministries are inducted into the relevant GoMs and when the advice is crystallised they are disbanded.

## Lok Sabha Speaker Amends Oath-Taking Rules For MPs

- A new clause has been added to **'Direction 1'** within the **'Directions by the Speaker'** to manage specific matters related to the House's functioning that are not explicitly covered by existing rules.
- According to the amendment to 'Direction 1', **the new clause 3** states that a member shall take and subscribe to the oath or affirmation **without using any words** or expressions as prefixes or suffixes to the prescribed form.

## What are the Challenges of the Cabinet Committees?

- **Overlapping Mandates:** It leads to **delays, inefficiency, and conflict** between committees as they fight for control. Proposals get stuck and decisions are slow.
- **Lack of Expertise:** A committee focused on healthcare policy might not have medical professionals on board. This can **lead to poorly informed decisions with unintended consequences**. Thus lack of experts can result in **long term policy ramifications**.
- **Information Silos & Poor Communication:** Committees might operate in isolation, not sharing information or collaborating. This creates blind spots and **hinders a holistic approach**. It leads to **duplication of effort, missed opportunities** for synergy, and decisions based on limited information.
- **Political Pressure & Short-termism:** Political considerations can push committees to **prioritise short-term gains** over long-term strategic planning. This can lead to **reactive measures instead of proactive solutions**.
- **Lack of Accountability & Transparency:** **The decisions made should not be** shrouded in **secrecy as it leads to erosion of trust**. Without clear information about committee activities and decisions, **the legislature can't hold them accountable**.
- **Concentration of Power:** If decision-making authority rests with only a few committees or individuals, valuable perspectives might be excluded. This can **lead to unbalanced decisions**. Important voices might not be heard, potentially **overlooking creative solutions and fostering resentment** among excluded parties.

## Way Forward

- **Clear Mandate:** Clearly **define committee mandates** to avoid ambiguity. Establish a **central conflict resolution body** for inter-committee disputes.
- **Expert Appointment:** Appoint **subject matter experts** as advisors or temporary committee members. Partner with **external think tanks** for specialised knowledge.
- **Better Information Sharing:** **Implement a centralised information sharing platform for all committees. Establish regular inter-committee briefings to foster collaboration.**
- **Long-Term Goals:** Mandate committees to develop long-term strategic plans alongside short-term action items. Integrate independent economic or social impact assessments into decision-making.
- **Accountability:** Regularly release meeting minutes and summaries ensures accountability.
- **Broad-Based Consultation:** The consultation should be more broad-based. Inviting other cabinet members as special invitees.

### Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the role and significance of Cabinet Committees. Suggest measures to enhance their effectiveness in policy formulation and implementation.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims:

**Q. Which of the following is/are the function/functions of the Cabinet Secretariat? (2014)**

1. Preparation of agenda for Cabinet Meetings
2. Secretarial assistance to Cabinet Committees
3. Allocation of Financial resources to the Ministries

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 2 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (c)**

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**Mains:**

**Q.** To what extent, in your view, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India? **(2021)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/appointment-to-cabinet-committees>

