



Mains Practice Question

Q. Analyze the role and responsibilities of the Speaker of Lok Sabha in ensuring effective functioning of the House. What measures can be taken to strengthen the impartiality and autonomy of the Speaker in performing their duties? (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer with a brief introduction about the Speaker.
- Discuss the role and responsibilities of the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
- Discuss the measures to strengthen the impartiality and autonomy of the Speaker.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- Article 93 to Article 97 of Indian Constitution contains provisions related to the Speaker of Lok Sabha. The Speaker of Lok Sabha is the presiding officer of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament.

Body

- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha derives his powers and duties from three sources, that is, the Constitution of India, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Lok Sabha, and Parliamentary Conventions.
- **Role and Responsibilities of the Speaker:**
 - **Primary Responsibility:**
 - He maintains **order and decorum** in the House for conducting its business and regulating its proceedings.
 - This is his **primary responsibility** and he **has final power** in this regard.
 - **Quasi-Judicial Role:**
 - **Adjudicating on Matters of Privilege:** The Speaker has the power to **decide** on matters related to breach of privilege of the House and its members.
 - He can **summon witnesses, demand papers and documents**, and **even order the imprisonment** of individuals for contempt of the House.
 - **Interpretation of Parliamentary Rules:** The Speaker is the **final authority** on parliamentary procedures and interpretation of rules. He can **give rulings on questions raised by members and decide on the admissibility of questions, motions, and amendments**.
 - **Disqualification of Members:** The Speaker has the **power to disqualify** a member of the House **on grounds of defection** or violation of parliamentary procedures.
 - **Executive Role:**
 - **Administrative Control over the Secretariat:** The Speaker has administrative control over the Lok Sabha Secretariat, which is responsible for providing support to the House in terms of research, documentation, and other related services.
 - **Management of Parliament House Estate:** The Speaker also has the

responsibility of managing the Parliament House Estate, which includes the **maintenance of the buildings and infrastructure**, and **ensuring the security of the premises**.

- Appointment of officers: The Speaker has the power to appoint certain officers to the House, such as the Secretary-General, Joint **Secretary, and Deputy Secretary**.
 - These appointments are made in consultation with the government.
- **Representing the House:** The Speaker is also responsible for representing the House in its **interactions** with other **institutions**, both **domestic and foreign**.
 - He may lead delegations on behalf of the House and attend international conferences and meetings.
- **Legislative Role:**
 - **Role in the Legislative Process:** The Speaker plays a vital role in the legislative process by **putting bills to vote** and announcing the **results of the vote**.
 - He can exercise a **casting vote** in the **case of a tie**.
 - **Certification of Bills:** The Speaker has the power to certify a bill as a Money Bill. Once certified, the bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha and not in the Rajya Sabha.
 - **Committees:** The Speaker has the **power to constitute committees**, such as the Business Advisory Committee, Rules Committee, and Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.
 - These committees are responsible for assisting the Speaker in conducting the business of the House and in framing rules and procedures.
- **Discretionary power:** The Speaker also has certain discretionary powers, such as **allowing a member to speak beyond the prescribed time limit**, suspending the business of the House for a brief period, and choosing the members who will speak on a particular issue.

Measures to Strengthen the Impartiality and Autonomy of the Speaker:

- **Adopting Global Practices:** In Britain, the **Speaker** is strictly a **non-party person**.
- **Code of Conduct:** The Speaker should be required to follow a code of conduct that lays down the principles of impartiality, transparency, and accountability.
 - The **code of conduct** should be developed **in consultation with all political parties** and should be enforced by **an independent body**.
- **Training and development:** The Speaker should be provided with regular training and development opportunities **to enhance their knowledge and skills**.
 - This should include training on **parliamentary procedures, leadership, conflict resolution, and communication skills**.
- **Strengthening parliamentary committees:** The role of parliamentary committees should be strengthened to provide independent oversight of the Speaker's decisions and actions.
 - This can be done by **empowering committees to scrutinize the Speaker's decisions and to recommend corrective action** where necessary.
- **Strengthening the Secretariat:** The Secretariat should be strengthened by providing the Secretariat with adequate resources, staffing, and training to provide support to the Speaker in the discharge of duties.

Conclusion

- The Speaker plays a crucial role in shaping and directing parliamentary proceedings, ensuring that important legislation is debated and passed.
 - The Speaker of Lok Sabha plays a pivotal role in the functioning of the Indian parliamentary system and is integral to the smooth functioning of the country's democracy

