

ASSIGNMENT

(SEC) Legislative Support

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

• Introduction:-

→ Parliamentary system in India has evolved for over 70 years now. Our political system has witnessed several important developments during this period of time, which have impacted practices and procedures of Indian Parliament. After Independence, Indian Constituent assembly adopted a system which could best guarantee democratic aspirations of its people. It would be erroneous to say that Indian Parliament is a replica of British Parliament. As Indian parliament has its own sets of rules, procedures and practices within the framework of Indian milieu. In the post-independence period, several new devices have enabled members of our legislature to draw attention of the govt. and to voice grievances of people. A true test of parliamentary institution lies in its capacity to adapt, change, evolve and incorporate. Many important developments have been incorporated in the practices and procedures of Indian Parliamentary system. One such development of vital significance is Committee System in India, which also has undergone many changes since its inception.

• Need of the Parliamentary Committees :-

→ Parliament is a large body which is not only varied and complex in nature, but also considerable in volume. The time at its disposal is limited. It cannot give close consideration to all the legislative and other matters like party-politics, factionalism, policy dissention on vital issues of national interests and paucity of time. Therefore, it is not able to perform its duties in a well organised manner. So, the actual work of Parliament like regulation of Executive and Administration, scrutiny of Legislative and constitution Amendment Bills, etc. is done through these Parliamentary Committees rather than through the whole House.

→ Parliamentary Committee means a committee which is appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the speaker which works under the direction of the speaker and present its report to the House or to the speaker and the Secretariat for which is provided by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

→ Mostly parliamentary business is conducted through these committees only. These committees perform the functions delegated to them by the House. Receiving information is the first essential need of the parliament for effective discharge of its functions.

- These committees help in finding out facts of cases, examining witnesses and evidences and then making responsible recommendations.
- Parliamentary Committees assist the House in its principal task of ensuring executive accountability.
- By their nature, Parliamentary Committees are of two kinds :-

* 1. Standing Committee :- These committees are permanent and regular committees which are constituted from time to time in pursuance of the provisions of an Act of Parliament or Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The work of these committees is of continuous nature. The Financial Committees, Department Related Standing Committees (DRCSs), and ~~some~~ some other major committees come under the category of Standing Committees.

* 2. Ad Hoc Committees :- These are appointed for a specific purpose and they cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report. The principal Ad hoc committees are the Select and Joint Committees on Bills. Railway Convention Committee, Joint Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex etc. also come under the category of the Ad hoc committees.

- Standing Committees are of three kinds :-
- 1. Public Accounts Committee, 2. Estimates Committee
- 3. Committee on Public Undertakings.

- ① 1. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is a committee of selected members of Parliament of India for the purpose of auditing the revenue and the expenditure of the Government of India. They check that Parliament exercises over the executive stems from the basic principal embodies the will of the people.
- This committee along with the other two standing committees, i.e., Estimates Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings, are the three Financial Standing Committees of the Parliament of India.
 - It serves as a check on the government specially with respect to its expenditure bill and its primary function is to examine the audit report of Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) after it is laid in the Parliament. C&AG assists the committee during the course of investigation. None of its members are allowed to be ministers in the govt. The main function of the committee is to ascertain whether the money granted by parliament has been spent by government within the scope of the demand.
 - The Public Accounts Committee ~~consists~~ consists of not more than 22 members, 15 elected by Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament, and not more than seven members of Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament.
 - The members are elected every year from amongst its members of respective houses

according to the principle of proportional representation (PR) by means of single transferable vote. The chairperson is appointed by the Lok Sabha Speaker. The term of office of the member is one year.

- At present, the 16th Lok Sabha has no designated leader of opposition, however the Indian National Congress (INC) being largest opposition party has gotten the responsibility of heading the PAC.
- The current PAC is headed by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury since July, 2019 after Mallikarjun Kharge, who was leader of INC in the Lok Sabha. He was re-appointed to a second term in May 2018.

(*) 2. Estimates Committee :- The Estimates Committee is a committee of selected members of Parliament, constituted by the Parliament of India (Lok Sabha), for the purpose of scrutinising the functioning of government ministries and departments in terms of expenditure and utilisation of funds. It also suggests alternative policies in order to bring about efficiency and economy in administration. It also examines whether the finances are laid out within the limits of the policy implied in the estimates and also to suggest the form in which the estimates shall be presented to the Parliament. ¶

- This committee along with the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) are the three financial standing committees of the Parliament of India.

- This committee consists of 30 members, all elected from the Lok Sabha, lower house of the Parliament. The members are elected every year from amongst its members of the Lok Sabha, according to the principle of proportional representation (PR) by means of single transferable vote.
- The chairperson is appointed by the Lok Sabha speaker. The term of office of the members is one year. A minister is not eligible to become a member of the committee.
- In case a member after his election to the committee becomes a minister, he/she ceases to be a member from the date of such appointment. There are no members from Rajya Sabha.
- Currently, the committee is headed by Jyirish Bahat from the Bhartiya Janta Party.

• Functions of this committee are:-

1. To suggest alternative policies in order to bring about efficiency and economy in administration.
2. To examine whether the money is well laid out within the limits of the policy implied in the estimates.
3. To report what economies, improvement in organisations, efficiency or administrative reform, consistent with the policy underlying the estimates may be effected.
4. To suggest the form in which the estimates shall be presented to Parliament.

Page No. 7.

3. Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) :-

- This is a committee of selected members of Parliament, constituted by the Parliament of India, founded on 1st May 1964 for the purpose of examining the reports and the accounts of the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) as specified in the fourth schedule of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. This committee is also comes under the category of the Financial Committees, along with the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Estimates Committee (EC).
- The committee consists of 22 members in total. 15 members are elected by the Lok Sabha and not more than 7 members of Rajya Sabha.
- The members are elected every year from among its members of respective houses according to the principle of proportional representation (PR) by means of single transferable votes.
- The chairperson is appointed by the Lok Sabha speaker. The term of office of the members is one year. A minister is not eligible to become a member of the committee. If a member after the election of committee becomes a minister, then he/she ceases to be a member from the date of such appointment.

• Functions of this Committee are :-

1. To examine the reports, if any of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on the Public Undertaking
2. To examine, in the context of autonomy and the efficiency of the Public Undertakings whether the affairs of the PUs are being managed in accordance with sound business principles and prudent commercial practices. X-X.