



Mains Practice Question

Q. Do Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administrations on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples. (250 Words)

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Approach

- First provide a brief introduction about the Parliamentary standing committees.
- Then, discuss the functions of these committees explaining the parliamentary control exercised by them and the issues associated with those.

Introduction

Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committees comprise 31 members (21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha) to be nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha respectively. The term of office of these Committees is not more than one year.

Body

The Committees have often been found keeping the administration on its toes thereby setting a benchmark of parliamentary control. This can be ascertained from the functions of such Committees, viz.:

- They **examine the demands for grants** of the related ministries/departments and report thereon.
- They **verify bills, belonging to the related ministries/departments**, referred by the Chairman or the Speaker.
- **Laying importance on the long-term plans and policies** guiding the working of the executive, these committees give necessary direction, guidance and inputs for broad policy formulations.
- They **facilitate input from experts** and those who may be directly affected by a policy or legislation.

Nevertheless, the functioning of the Committees is marred with several issues, such as:

- The meetings happen behind closed doors leading to the issue of transparency.
- The Committees' suggestions are not enforceable in nature.
- It is not necessary to route all the bills to the Committees. Thus, proper scrutiny of all the bills is not guaranteed.
- The Committees can hardly be considered a specialised body as their tenure is just of one year.

Conclusion

Thus, though it is comparatively less difficult to examine an issue in depth by a committee of 30 than by an assembly of 700, the issues faced by these Committees limits their scope.

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