

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

The work done by the Parliament in modern times is not only varied in nature, but considerable in volume. The time at its disposal is limited. It cannot, therefore, give close consideration to all the legislative and other matters that come up before it. A good deal of its business is, therefore, transacted in Committees of the House, known as Parliamentary Committees.

2. The origin of Committee system in India can be traced back to the Constitutional Reforms of 1919. The Standing Orders of the Central Legislative Assembly provided for a Committee on Petitions relating to Bills, Select Committee on Amendments of Standing Orders, and Select Committee on Bills. There was also a provision for a Public Accounts Committee and a Joint Committee on a Bill. Apart from Committees of the Legislative Assembly, members of both Houses of the Central Legislature also served on the Standing Advisory Committees attached to various Departments of the Government of India. All these Committees were purely advisory in character and functioned under the control of the Government with the Minister-in-charge of the Department acting as the Chairperson of the Committee.

3. A Parliamentary Committee means a Committee which is appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker and which works under the direction of the Speaker and presents its report to the House or to the Speaker and the Secretariat for which is provided by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

4. Parliamentary Committees are of two types: Standing Committees and *Ad hoc* Committees.

Constitution

5. Certain Parliamentary Committees are appointed by the House or the Speaker or the Presiding Officers of both the Houses in consultation with each other as the case may be from time-to-time on *ad hoc* basis as and when necessary for a particular purpose, such as Select/Joint Committee on a Bill for example Select Committee on the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 1996; Joint Committee on the Constitution (Eighty-first Amendment) Bill, 1996; Joint Committee on the Broadcasting Bill, 1997; Joint Committee on Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 1998; Committee to inquire into the misconduct of Members of Lok Sabha (2007) and Committee on Draft Five Year Plans and Joint Committee to suggest facilities and remuneration for Members of Parliament (1993).

The Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs) on special issues are constituted to investigate serious issues which have greatly agitated the public mind and

which involves fraud or corruption on a large scale. Such Committees are set up on the basis of a consensus arrived at between the Government and the Opposition. JPC is a well known and potent investigative mechanism of Parliament. These Committees becomes *functus officio* after submission of their report to the Parliament. The following JPCs in this category have been constituted so far— (i) Joint Committee to enquire into Bofors Contract (1987); (ii) Joint Committee to enquire into Irregularities in Securities and Banking Transactions (1992); (iii) Joint Committee to Stock Market Scam and matters relating thereto (2001); (iv) Joint Committee on Pesticide residues in and safety standards for soft drink, fruit juice and other beverages (2003); (v) Joint Committee to examine matters relating to allocation and Pricing of Telecom Licences and Spectrum (2011).

Besides, the following Joint Committees are being appointed by the Presiding Officers on *ad hoc* basis for particular purposes for the last few years on the basis of periodically assessing their need *viz.*; Joint Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex; Joint Committee on Installation of Portraits/ Statues of National Leaders and Parliamentarians in Parliament House Complex; Joint Committee on Maintenance of Heritage Character and Development of Parliament House Complex; Joint Committee on Security in Parliament House Complex; Committee on Provision of Computers to Members of Lok Sabha; Committee on

Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (Lok Sabha) and Committee on Violation of Protocol Norms and Contemptuous Behaviour of Government Officers with Members of Lok Sabha are House specific *ad hoc* Committees of Lok Sabha appointed by the Speaker.

Joint Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes is being constituted as an *ad hoc* Committee since 2012 in pursuance of motions moved in and adopted by the Houses of Parliament. These motions are moved by the Government.

The constitution, composition and functions, etc. of these Committees constituted by the House through motions and laid down in the motions and in the case of Committees constituted by the Presiding Officers their terms of reference are decided by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha in consultation with each other as may be necessary subject to the relevant rules and directions relating to Parliamentary Committees.

6. Lok Sabha has the following Standing Parliamentary Committees with membership indicated against each. Some of these Committees are Joint Committees as Members of both the Houses of Parliament are nominated/elected to them as per rules/relevant provisions in the Acts. These are the Committees on Public Accounts, Public Undertakings, the Welfare of

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Offices of Profit, Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament, Empowerment of Women and Library Committee.

<i>Name of Committee</i>	<i>No. of Members</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Business Advisory Committee	15
2. Committee of Privileges	15
3. Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House	15
4. Committee on Empowerment of Women [®]	30
5. Committee on Estimates*	30
6. Committee on Government Assurances	15
7. Committee on Papers Laid on the Table	15
8. Committee on Petitions	15
9. Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions	15
10. Committee on Public Accounts [#]	22
11. Committee on Public Undertakings**	22
12. Committee on Subordinate Legislation	15

[®] See Abstract No. 23

* See Abstract No. 20

See Abstract No. 19

** See Abstract No. 21

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
13. Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*	30
14. General Purposes Committee	Not fixed ^T
15. House Committee	12
16. Joint Committee on Offices of Profit	15
17. Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament	15
18. Library Committee	9
19. Rules Committee	15
20. Ethics Committee	15

* See Abstract No. 22

^T Consists of Speaker, Dy. Speaker, Panel of Chairpersons, Chairpersons of Standing Committees, Leaders of Parties and such other members as may be nominated by the Speaker.

Apart from the above Standing Committees, the following Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) under their jurisdiction cover various Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India:

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Committee on Agriculture	31 [@]
2. Committee on Information Technology	31 [@]
3. Committee on Defence	31 [@]

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
4. Committee on Energy	31 [@]
5. Committee on External Affairs	31 [@]
6. Committee on Finance	31 [@]
7. Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution	31 [@]
8. Committee on Labour	31 [@]
9. Committee on Petroleum & Natural Gas	31 [@]
10. Committee on Railways	31 [@]
11. Committee on Urban Development	31 [@]
12. Committee on Water Resources	31 [@]
13. Committee on Chemicals & Fertilizers	31 [@]
14. Committee on Rural Development	31 [@]
15. Committee on Coal & Steel	31 [@]
16. Committee on Social Justice & Empowerment	31 [@]
17. Committee on Commerce	31 [@]
18. Committee on Home Affairs	31 [@]
19. Committee on Human Resource Development	31 [@]
20. Committee on Industry	31 [@]

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
21. Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests	31 [@]
22. Committee on Transport, Tourism & Culture	31 [@]
23. Committee on Health & Family Welfare	31 [@]
24. Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law & Justice	31 [@]

[@] includes 10 members of Rajya Sabha.
Committees from Sl. No. 1 to 16 are under the administrative control of the Speaker and the Secretariat assistance is provided to these Committees by the Lok Sabha Secretariat. The Speaker appoints Chairpersons of these 16 Committees. The remaining 8 Committees are under the administrative control of Chairman, Rajya Sabha. The Chairpersons of these 8 Committees are appointed by Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

7. No member is to be appointed or nominated or elected to a Committee if unwilling to serve on it.

8. The Speaker, Lok Sabha, nominates members to Business Advisory Committee, Committee of Privileges, Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House, Committee on Government Assurances, Committee on Papers Laid on the Table, Committee on Petitions, Committee on Private Members' Bills and

Resolutions, Committee on Subordinate Legislation, General Purposes Committee, House Committee, Rules Committee and Committee on Ethics in pursuance of the provisions of rules governing these committees.

9. Twenty members of Lok Sabha and ten Members of Rajya Sabha are nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, respectively on the Committee on Empowerment of Women.

10. Twenty-one members of Lok Sabha and ten members of Rajya Sabha are nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, respectively on the twenty four Departmentally Related Standing Committees.

11. Ten members of Lok Sabha and five members of Rajya Sabha are nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha respectively, to the Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament in pursuance of section 9(1) of the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954.

12. As far as possible, different Parties and Groups are represented on Committees in proportion to their respective strength in the House. As such a Committee is a microcosm of the whole House.

13. In the case of Committees on (i) Estimates; (ii) Public Accounts; (iii) Public Undertakings; (iv) the

Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, members of Lok Sabha are elected by the House in pursuance of the motions moved in and adopted by the Houses.

14. Members of Rajya Sabha are also associated with the Committee on Public Accounts, Committee on Public Undertakings and Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Welfare of Other Backward Classes for which necessary motions are moved in and adopted by both the Houses. The Joint Committee on Offices of Profit consists of 15 members — 10 elected from Lok Sabha and 5 elected from Rajya Sabha. It is constituted in pursuance of a motion moved in and adopted by both the Houses. It continues in office for the duration of a Lok Sabha.

15. Library Committee consists of 9 members — 6 members of Lok Sabha and 3 members of Rajya Sabha nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, respectively.

16. In the case of Committee on Empowerment of Women, Committee on Estimates, Committee on Public Accounts, Committee on Public Undertakings, Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Committee on Subordinate Legislation, Committee on Government Assurances, Committee on Petitions and Departmentally Related Standing Committees, a Minister is not to be nominated/elected as a member of any of

these Committees. In case, a member after his nomination/election to any of these Committees is appointed a Minister, such member ceases to be a member of the Committee from the date of such appointment.

17. Casual vacancies in a Parliamentary Committee are filled by appointment or election by the House on a motion made, or nomination by the Speaker, as the case may be and any member appointed, elected or nominated to fill such vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired portion of the term for which the member in whose place, member to fill the casual vacancy is appointed, elected or nominated would have normally held office.

18. A member may resign from the Committee by writing under own hand addressed to the Speaker.

19. If a member remains absent from two or more consecutive sittings of the Committee without the permission of the Chairperson of the Committee such member may be discharged from the Committee by the House or the Speaker as the case may be.

Appointment of Chairpersons

20. The Chairpersons of all the Parliamentary Committees serviced by the Lok Sabha Secretariat are appointed by the Speaker, from amongst the members of the Committee. In case the Speaker is a member of the Committee, he/she is *ex-officio* Chairperson of that

Committee. In case the Speaker is not a member of the Committee but the Deputy Speaker is, then the latter is appointed as Chairperson of that Committee.

21. However, the Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament elects its own Chairperson at their first sitting.

22. In case of the Committee on Public Accounts, as per established convention, a member belonging to major Opposition Parties/Groups is appointed Chairperson of the Committee.

Term of Office

23. Parliamentary Committees hold office for a period of one year as prescribed in the rules or for a period specified by the Speaker/by the motion or until a new Committee is nominated.

24. The members, nominated to the Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament, hold office for a period of one year from the date of first sitting of the Committee where the members elect the Chairperson.

Quorum

25. One third of the total number of members of the Committee is required for the quorum to constitute a sitting of the Committee. In the absence of the required quorum, the Chairperson either suspends the sitting until there is

a quorum or adjourns the sitting to some future day. In the event of a Committee being adjourned for two successive sittings on account of lack of quorum, the Chairperson has to report the fact to the Speaker when the Committee has been appointed by the Speaker or else to the House.

General

26. The sittings of a Committee are held on such days and at such hour as fixed by the Chairperson of the Committee. If the Chairperson is not readily available, the Secretary-General may fix the date and time of a sitting and in the case of Select or Joint Committee on a Bill he may consult the Minister concerned.

27. Sittings of Parliamentary Committees are held in private. It is not permissible for a member of the Committee or any one who has access to proceedings of the Committee, to communicate, directly or indirectly, to the press any information regarding its proceedings etc., before the report has been presented to the House.

28. All questions at any sitting of a Committee should be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting. In the case of an equality of votes on any matter, the Chairperson, or the person acting as such, shall have a second or casting vote.

29. Report of the Committee is presented to the House by the Chairperson or in absence of Chairperson by any member of the Committee.

30. The Parliamentary Committees may appoint sub-Committees, take evidence or call for documents, send for persons, papers and records and make special reports to the House. They can make suggestions on procedure. They can make detailed rules for their internal working.

31. The members of the Committee enjoy the same rights and powers in regard to the freedom of speech, arrest etc. as are enjoyed by the members of the House.

32. Where a member of a Committee has a personal, pecuniary or direct interest in any matter which is to be considered by the Committee, such member is required to state one's own interest therein to the Speaker through the Chairperson of the Committee.

33. The Parliamentary Committees cease to exist on the dissolution of Lok Sabha.

Functions

34. The functions of Standing Committees except Committee on Empowerment of Women, Committee on Public Accounts, Committee on Estimates, Committee on Public Undertakings and Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are briefly indicated below:

Business Advisory Committee

To recommend the time that should be allotted for the discussion of such Government, Legislative and other business as the Speaker, in consultation with the Leader

of the House, may direct to be referred to the Committee. The Committee, on its own initiative may also recommend to the Government to bring forward particular subjects for discussion in the House and recommend allocation of time for such discussions.

Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions

To allot time to Private Members' Bills and Resolutions, to examine Private Members' Bills seeking to amend the Constitution before their introduction in Lok Sabha, and also to examine such Private Members' Bills where the legislative competence of the House is challenged.

Committee on Papers Laid on the Table

To examine all papers laid on the Table of the House by Ministers (other than those which fall within the purview of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation or any other Parliamentary Committee) and to report to the House — (a) whether there has been compliance of the provisions of the Constitution, Act, rule or regulation under which the paper has been laid; (b) whether there has been any unreasonable delay in laying the paper; (c) if there has been such delay, whether a statement explaining the reasons for delay has been laid on the Table of the House and whether those reasons are satisfactory; (d) whether both the Hindi and English versions of the paper have been laid on the Table; (e) whether a statement explaining the reasons for not laying the Hindi version has been given and whether such reasons are satisfactory; and

(f) such other functions in respect of the papers laid on the Table as may be assigned to it by the Speaker from time to time.

Committee on Petitions

To consider and report on petitions presented to the House. Also to consider representations from various individuals, associations etc. not covered by the rules relating to petitions and give directions for their disposal.

Committee of Privileges

To examine every question involving breach of privilege of the House or of the members or of any Committee thereof referred to it by the House or by the Speaker. Also to determine with reference to the facts of each case whether a breach of privilege is involved and make suitable recommendations in its report.

Committee on Ethics

The Committee on Ethics was constituted as an *ad hoc* Committee since 2000 and the Rules Committee in its Second Report presented to the House on 05.08.2015 recommended making it a permanent Standing Committee by incorporating relevant rules in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The functions of the Committee are to examine every complaint relating to unethical conduct of a member of Lok Sabha referred to it by the Speaker and to make

such recommendations as it may deem fit from time to time. The Committee is also mandated to formulate a Code of Conduct for members and suggest amendments or additions to such Code of Conduct.

Committee on Subordinate Legislation

To scrutinize and report to the House whether the powers to make regulations, rules, sub-rules, bye-laws etc. conferred by the Constitution or delegated by Parliament are being properly exercised by the executive within the scope of such delegation.

Committee on Government Assurances

To scrutinize the assurances, promises, undertakings etc. given by Ministers from time to time and to report on the extent to which such assurances etc. have been implemented and to see whether such implementation has taken place within the minimum time necessary for the purpose.

Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House

To consider applications from members for leave of absence from the sittings of the House and examine every case where a member has been absent for a period of 60 days or more, without permission, from the sittings of the House.

Rules Committee

To consider matters of procedure and conduct of business in the House and recommend any amendments or additions to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha that are considered necessary.

General Purposes Committee

To advise the Speaker on such matters concerning the affairs of the House as may be referred to it by the Speaker from time to time.

House Committee

To deal with all questions relating to residential accommodation for members of Lok Sabha and also exercise supervision over facilities for accommodation, food, medical aid and other amenities accorded to members in members' residences and hostels in Delhi.

Library Committee

To consider and advise on such matters concerning the Library as may be referred to it by the Speaker from time to time. Also to consider suggestions for the improvement of the Library and assist members of both Houses in fully utilising the services provided by the Library.

Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament

To make rules, after consultation with the Central Government to provide for travelling and daily allowances,

medical, housing, telephone, postal, water, electricity, constituency and secretarial facilities etc. to members of both Houses.

Joint Committee on Offices of Profit

To examine the composition and character of the Committees appointed by the Central and State Governments and to recommend what offices should disqualify and what offices should not disqualify a person for being chosen as, and for being a member of either House of Parliament under article 102 of the Constitution.

Also to scrutinise from time to time the Schedule to the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959, and to recommend any amendments in the said Schedule, whether by way of addition, omission or otherwise.

Twenty-four Departmentally related Standing Committees

The functions of each of the Departmentally related Standing Committees are:—

(a) to consider the Demands for Grants of the concerned Ministries/Departments; (b) to examine such Bills pertaining to the concerned Ministries/Departments as are referred to the Committee by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, as the case may be; (c) to consider annual reports of Ministries/Departments; and (d) to

consider national basic long term policy documents presented to the House, if referred to the Committee by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, as the case may be, and make reports thereon.

[Article 102 of the Constitution and Rules 253 to 331N of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and Directions 48 to 108 of the Directions by the Speaker lay down the rules and practices about the Parliamentary Committees.]

17

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COMMITTEES



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PREFACE

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and gives in brief the composition, functions, term of office and powers etc. of Standing Parliamentary Committees. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, Directions issued by the Speaker under the Rules of Procedure. It is intended to serve as a handy guide for ready reference.

The information contained in this Abstract is, however, not exhaustive. It will, therefore, be prudent to refer to and rely on the original sources for full information.

NEW DELHI

Secretary General