

APPOLO STUDY CENTRE

INDIAN POLITY

GROUP 1&II PRELIMS WEEKLY TEST - 4

Parliament Part -2

- Session of Parliament
- Devices of Parliamentary Proceedings
- Legislative Procedure in Parliament
- Joint Sitting of Two Houses
- Parliament committees
- Parliamentary Meetings
- Parliamentary Groups

SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT

Summoning

The President from time to time summons each House of Parliament to meet. But, the maximum gap between two sessions of Parliament cannot be more than six months. In other words, the Parliament should meet at least twice a year. There are usually three sessions in a year, viz.

The Budget Session (February to May):

The Monsoon Session (July to September):

The Winter Session (November to December).

A 'session' of Parliament is the period spanning between the first sitting of a House and its prorogation (or dissolution in the case of the lok Sabha). During a session, the House meets everyday to transact business. the period

spanning between the prorogation of a House and its reassembly in a new session is called 'recess'.

Adjournment

A session of Parliament consists of many meetings. Each meeting of a day consists of two sittings, that is, a morning sitting from 11am to 1 pm and post-lunch sitting from 2 pm to 6pm. A Sitting of Parliament can be terminated by adjournment or adjournment sine die or prorogation or dissolution (in the case of the Lok Sabha). An adjournment suspends the work in a sitting for a specified time, which may be hours, days or weeks.

Adjournment Sine die means terminating a sitting or parliament for an indefinite period. In other words, when the House is adjourned without naming a day for reassembly, it is called adjournment sine die. The power of adjournment as well as adjournment sine die lies with the presiding officer of the House. He can also call a sitting of the House before the date or time to which it has been adjourned or at any time after the House has been adjourned sine die.

Prorogation

The presiding officer (Speaker or Chairman) declares the House adjourned sine die, when the business of a session is completed. Within the next few days, the President issues a notification for prorogation of the session.

The specific difference between adjournment and prorogation are summarised in table.

Dissolution

Rajya Sabha, being a permanent House, is not subject to dissolution. Only the lok Sabha is subject to dissolution. Unlike a prorogation, a dissolution ends the very life of the existing House, and a new House is constituted after general elections are held. The dissolution of the Lok Sabha may take place in either of two ways:

Automatic dissolution, that is, on the expiry of its tenure of five years or the terms extended during a national emergency; or

Whenever the President decides to dissolve the House, which he is authorised to do. Once the Lok Sabha is dissolved before the completion of its normal tenure, the dissolution is irrevocable.

Adjournment	Prorogation
It only terminates a sitting and not a session of the House.	It not only terminates a sitting but also a session of the House
It is done by presiding officer of the house.	It is done by the president of India.
It does not affect the bills or any other business pending before the house and the same can be resumed when the House meets again.	It also does not affect the bills or any other business pending before the House. However, all pending notice (other than those for introducing bills) lapse on prorogation and fresh notices have to be given for the next session. In Britain, prorogation brings to an end all bills or any other business pending before the House.

When the Lok Sabha is dissolved all business including bills, motions, resolutions, notices, petitions and so on pending before it or its committees lapse. They (to be pursued further) must be reintroduced in the newly-constituted Lok Sabha. However, some pending bills and all pending assurances do not lapse on the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The position with respect to lapsing of bills is as follows:

A Bill pending in the Lok Sabha lapses (whether originating in the Lok Sabha or transmitted to it by the Rajya Sabha).

A bill passed by the Lok Sabha but pending in the Rajya Sabha lapses.

A bill not passed by the two Houses due to disagreement and if the president has notified the holding of joint sitting before the dissolution of Lok Sabha, does not lapse.

A bill pending in the Rajya Sabha but not passed by the Lok Sabha does not lapse.

A bill passed by both Houses but pending assent of the president does not lapse.

A bill passed by both Houses but returned by the president for reconsideration of Houses does not lapse.

Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of members required to be present in the House before it can transact any business. It is one-tenth of the total number of members in each House including the presiding officer. It means that there must be at least 55 members present in the Rajya Sabha. If any business is to be conducted. If there is no quorum during a meeting of the House, it is the duty of the presiding officers either to adjourn the House or to suspend the meeting until there is a quorum.

Voting in House

All matters at any sitting of either House or joint sitting of both the House are decided by a majority of votes of the members present and voting, excluding the presiding officer. Only a few matters, which are specifically mentioned in the Constitution like impeachment of the President, amendment of the constitution, removal of the presiding officers of the Parliament and so on, require special majority, not ordinary majority.

The presiding officer of a House does not vote in the first instance, but exercises a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes. The proceedings of a House are to be valid irrespective of any unauthorised voting or participation or any vacancy in its membership.

The following points can be noted with respect to the voting procedure in the Lok Sabha:

1. On the conclusion of debate, the Speaker shall put the question and invite those who are in favour of the motion to say 'Aye' and those against the motion to say 'No'.
2. The Speaker shall then say: ' I Think the Ayes (or the Noes, as the case may be) have it. If the opinion of the Speaker as to the decision of a question is not challenged, he shall say twice: The Ayes (or the Noes, as

the case may be) have it and the question before the house shall be determined accordingly.

3. If the opinion of the Speaker as to the decision of a question is challenged, he shall order that the Lobby be cleared.
 - a) After the lapse of three minutes and thirty seconds, he shall put the question a second time and declare whether in his opinion the 'Ayes' or the 'Noes' have it.
 - b) If the opinion so declared is again challenged, he shall direct that the votes be recorded either by operating the automatic vote recorder or by using 'Aye' and 'No' slips in the by House or by the members going into the Lobbies.
4. If in the opinion of the Speaker, the Division is unnecessarily claimed, he may ask the members who are for 'Aye' and those for 'No' respectively to rise in their places and, on a count being taken, he may declare and determination of the House. In such a Case, the names of the voters shall not a recorded.

Language in Parliament

The Constitution has declared Hindi and English to be the languages for transacting business in the Parliament. However, the presiding officer can permit a member to address the House in his mother-tongue. In both the House, arrangements are made for simultaneous translation. Though English was to be discontinued as a floor language after the expiration of the fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution (that is , in 1965), the Official Languages Act (1963) allowed English to be continued along with Hindi.

Rights of Ministers and Attorney General

In addition to the members of a House, every minister and the attorney general of either House, any joint sitting of both the Houses and any committee of Parliament of which he is a member, without being entitled to vote. There are two reasons underlying this constitutional provision:

1. A minister can participate in the proceedings of a House, of which he is not member. In other words, a minister belonging to the Lok Sabha can participate in the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha and vice-versa.
2. A minister, who is not a member of either House, can participate in the proceedings of both the Houses. It should be noted here that a person can remain a minister for six months, without being a member of either House of parliament.



Lame-duck Session

If refers to the last session of the existing Lok sabha, after a new Lok Sabha has been elected. Those members of the existing Lok Sabha who could not get re-elected to the new Lok Sabha are called lame- ducks.

❖ DEVICES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

Question Hour

The first hour of every parliamentary sitting is slotted for this. During this time, the members ask questions and the ministers usually give answers. The questions are of three kinds, namely, starred, unstarred and short notice.

A starred question (distinguished by an asterisk) requires an oral answer and hence supplementary questions can follow.

An unstarred question, on the other hand, requires a written answer and hence, supplementary questions cannot follow. A short notice question is one that is asked by giving a notice of less than ten days. It is answered orally.

In addition to the ministers, the questions can also be asked to the private members. Thus, a question may be addressed to a private member if the subject matter of the question relates to some bill, resolution or other matter connected with the business of the House for which that member is responsible. The procedure in regard to such questions addressed to a minister.

The list of starred, unstarred, short notice questions and questions to private member are printed in green, white, light pink and yellow colour, respectively, to distinguish them from one another.

Zero Hour

Unlike the question hour, the zero hour is not mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Thus it is an informal device available to the members of the Parliament to raise matters without any prior notice. The zero hour starts immediately after the question hour and lasts until the agenda for the day. (ie,

regular business of the House) is taken up. In other words, the time gap between the question hour and the agenda is known as zero hour. It is an Indian innovation in the field of parliamentary procedures and has been in existence since 1962.

Motions

No discussion on a matter of general public importance can take place except on a motion made with the consent of the presiding officer. The House expresses its decisions or opinions on various issues through the adoption or rejection or motions moved by either ministers or private members.

The Motions moved by the members to raise discussions on various matters fall into three principal categories:

1. **Substantive Motion:** It is a self-contained independent proposal dealing with very important matter like impeachment of the President or removal of Chief Election Commissioner.
2. **Substitute Motion:** It is a motion that is moved in substitution of an original motion and proposes an alternative to it. If adopted by the House, it supersedes the original motion.
3. **Subsidiary Motion:** It is a motion that, by itself, has no meaning and cannot state the decision of the House without reference to the original motion or proceedings of the House. It is divided into three sub-categories:
 - a) **Ancillary Motion:** It is used as the regular way of proceeding with various kind of business.
 - b) **Superseding Motion:** It is moved in the course of debate on another issue and seeks to supersede that issue.
 - c) **Amendment:** It seeks to modify or substitute only a part of the original motion

Closure Motion It is a motion moved by a member to cut short the debate on a matter before the House. If the motion is approved by the House, debate is stopped forthwith and the matter is put to vote. There are four kinds of closure motion.

- a) **Simple Closure:** It is one when a member moves that the matter having been sufficiently discussed be now put to vote.
- b) **Closure by Compartments:** In this case, the clauses of a bill or a lengthy
- c) **Kangaroo Closure:** Under this type, only important clauses are taken up for debate and voting and the intervening clauses are skipped over and taken as passed.
- d) **guillotine Closure:** It is one when the undiscussed clauses of a bill or a resolution are also put to vote along with the discussed ones due to want of time (as the time allotted for the discussion is over).

Privilege Motion

It is concerned with the breach of parliamentary privileges by a minister. It is moved by a member when he feels that minister has committed a breach of privilege of the House or one or more of its members by withholding facts of a case or by giving wrong or distorted facts. Its purpose is to censure the concerned minister.

Calling Attention Motion

It is introduced in the Parliament by a member to call the attention of a minister to a matter of urgent public importance, and to seek an authoritative statement from him on that matter. Like the zero hour, it is also an Indian innovation in the parliamentary procedure and has been in existence since 1954. However, unlike the zero hour, it is mentioned in the Rules of procedure.

Adjournment Motion

It is introduced in the Parliament to draw attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance, and needs the support of 50

members to be admitted. As it interrupts the normal business of the House, it is regarded as an extra ordinary device. It involves an element of censure against the government and hence Rajya Sabha is not permitted to make use of this device. The discussion on an adjournment motion should last for not less than two hours and thirty minutes.

The right to move a motion for an adjournment of the business of the house is subject to the following restrictions:

1. It should raise a matter which is definite, factual, urgent and of public importance;
2. It should not cover more than one matter;
3. It should be restricted to a specific matter of recent occurrence and should not be framed in general terms;
4. It should not raise a question of privilege;
5. It should not revive discussion on a matter that has been discussed in the same session;
6. It should not deal with any matter that is under adjudication by court; and
7. It should not raise any question that can be raised on a distinct motion.

No-Confidence Motion

Article 75 of the Constitution says that the council of ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. It means that the ministry stays in office so long as it enjoys confidence of the majority of the members of the Lok Sabha. In other words, the Lok Sabha can remove the ministry from office by passing a no confidence motion. The Motion needs the support of 50 members to be admitted.

Confidence Motion

The motion of confidence has come up as a new procedural device to cope with the emerging situations of fractured mandates resulting in hung parliament, minority governments and coalition governments. The governments formed with wafer-thin majority have been called upon by the president to prove their majority on the floor of the House. The government of the day, sometimes, on its own, seeks to prove its majority by moving a

motion of confidence and winning the confidence of the House. If the confidence motion is negative, it results in the fall of the government.

Censure Motion

A censure motion is different from a no-confidence motion as shown in table

Censure Motion	No- confidence Motion
It should state the reasons for its adoption in the Lok Sabha.	It need not state the reasons for its adoption in the Lok Sabha.
It can moved against an individual minister or a group of ministers or the entire council of ministers.	It can be moved against the entire council of ministers only.
It is moved for censuring the council of ministers for specific policies and actions.	It is moved for ascertaining the confidence of Lok Sabha in the council of Ministers.
If it is passed in the lok sabha, the council of ministers need not resign from the office.	If it is passed in the lok Sabha, the council of ministers must resign from office.

Motion of Thanks

The first session after each general election and the first session of every fiscal year is addressed by the president. In this address, the president outlines the polices and programmes of the government in the preceding year and ensuring year. This address of the president, which corresponds to the speech from the throne in Britain', is discussed in both the Houses of Parliament on a motion called the 'motion of Thanks'. At the end of the discussion, the motion is put to vote. This motion must be passed in the House. Otherwise, it amounts to the defeat of the government.

This inaugural speech of the president is an occasion available to the members of Parliament to raise discussions and debates administration for its lapses and failures.

No-Day-Yet-Named Motion

It is a motion that has been admitted by the speaker but no date has been fixed for its discussion. The Speaker, after considering the state of business in the House and in consultation with the leader of the House or on the recommendation of the Business Advisory Committee, discussion of such a motion.

Dilatory Motion

It is a motion for the adjournment of the debate on a bill/ motion / resolution etc. or a motion to retard or delay the progress of a business under consideration of the House. It can be moved by a member at any time after a motion has been made. The debate on a dilatory motion must be restricted to the matter contained in such motion. If the Speaker is of the opinion that such a motion is an abuse of the rules of the House, he may either forthwith put the question thereon or decline to propose the question.

Point of Order

A member can raise a point of order when the proceedings of the House do not follow the normal rules of procedure. A point of order should relate to the interpretation or enforcement of the Rules of the House or such raise a question that is within the cognizance of the Speaker. It is usually raised by an opposition member in order to control the government. It is an extraordinary device as it suspends is allowed on a point of order.

Half-an-Hour discussion

It is meant for discussing a matter of sufficient public importance, which has been subjected to a lot of debate and the answer to which needs elucidation on a matter of fact. The Speaker can allot three days in a week for such discussions. There is no formal motion or voting before the House.

Short Duration Discussion

It is also known as two-hour discussion as the time allotted for such a discussion should not exceed two hours. The members of the Parliament can raise such discussions on a matter of urgent public importance. The discussions. There is neither a formal motion before the house nor voting. this device has been in existence since 1953.

Special Mention

A matter which is not a point of order or which cannot be raised during question hour, half-an hour discussion, short duration discussion or under adjournment motion, calling attention notice or under any rule of the House

can be raised under the special mention in the Rajya Sabha. Its equivalent procedural device in the Lok Sabha is known as 'Notice (mention) Under Rule 377.

Resolutions

The members can move resolutions to draw the attention of the House or the government to matters of general public interest. The discussion on a resolution is strictly relevant to and within the scope of the resolution.

A member who has moved a resolution or amendment to a resolution cannot withdraw the same except by leave of the House.

Resolutions are classified into three categories.

1. Private Member's Resolution: it is one that is moved by a private member (other than a minister). It is discussed only on alternate Fridays and in the afternoon sitting.
2. Government resolution: It is one that is moved by a minister. It can be taken up any day from Monday to Thursday.
3. Statutory Resolution: it can be moved either by a private member or a minister. It is so called because it is always tabled in pursuance of a provision in the constitution or an Act of Parliament.

Resolutions are different from motions in the following respects:

"All resolutions come in the category of substantive motions, that is to say, every resolution is a particular type of motion. All Motions need not necessarily be substantive. Further, all motions are not necessarily put to vote of the House, whereas all the resolutions are required to be voted upon.

Youth Parliament

The scheme of Youth Parliament was started on the recommendation of the Fourth All India Whips Conference. Its objectives are:

1. to acquaint the younger generations with practices and procedures of Parliament;
2. to imbibe the spirit of discipline and tolerance cultivating character in the minds of youth; and

- to inculcate in the student community the basic values of democracy and to enable them to acquire a proper perspective on the functioning of democratic institutions.

The ministry of parliamentary affairs provides necessary training and encouragement to the states in introducing the Scheme.

LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE IN PARLIAMENT

The legislative procedure is identical in both the House of parliament. Every bill has to pass through the same stages in each House. A bill is a proposal for legislation and it becomes an act or law when duly enacted.

Bills introduced in the parliament are of two kinds: public bills and private bills (also known as government bills and private members bills respectively). Though both are government by the same stages in the house, they differ in various respects as shown in table

Public Bill	Private Bill
It is introduced in the Parliament by a minister.	It is introduced by any member of parliament other than a minister
It reflects of the policies of the government (ruling Party).	It reflects the stand of opposition party on public matter.
Its rejection by the House amounts to the expression of want of parliamentary confidence in the government and may lead to its resignation	It has lesser chance to be approved by the parliament.
Its rejection by the House amounts to the expression of want of parliamentary confidence in the government and may lead to its resignation	It rejection by the House has no implication on the parliamentary confidence in the government or its resignation.
Its introduction in the House requires seven days' notice.	Its introduction in the House requires one month's notice.
It is drafted by the concerned department in consultation with the law department.	Its drafting is the responsibility of the member concerned.

The bills introduced in the parliament can also be classified into four categories:

1. Ordinary bills, which are concerned with any matter other than financial subjects.
2. Money bills, which are concerned with financial matters like taxation, public expenditure, etc.
3. Financial bills, which are also concerned with financial matters (but are different from money bills).
4. Constitution amendment bills, which are concerned with the amendment of the provisions of the Constitution.

The Constitution has laid down Separate procedures for the enactment of all the four types of bills. The procedures with regard to ordinary bills, money bills and financial bill are explained here. The procedure with regard to Constitution amendment bills is explained in detail in Chapter 10.

Ordinary Bills

Every ordinary bill has to pass through the following five stages in the Parliament before it finds a place on the Statute Book:

1. First Reading

An ordinary bill can be introduced in either House or parliament. Such a bill can be introduced either by a minister or by any other member. The member who wants to introduce the bill has to ask for the leave of the House. When the House grants leave to introduce the bill, the mover of the bill introduces it by reading its title and objectives. No discussion on the bill takes place at this stage. Later, the bill is published in the Gazette of India. If a bill is published in the Gazette before its introduction, leave of the House to introduce the bill is not necessary. The introduction of the bill and its publication in the Gazette constitute the first reading of the bill.

2. Second Reading

During this stage, the bill receives not only the general but also the detailed scrutiny and assumes its final shape. Hence, it forms the most important stage in the enactment of a bill. In fact, this stage involves three more sub-stages, namely, stage of general discussion, committee stage and consideration stage.

a) Stage of General Discussion

The Printed copies of the bill are distributed to all the members. The principles of the bill and its provisions are discussed generally, but the details of the bill are not discussed.

At this stage, the House can take any one of the following four actions:

1. It may take the bill into consideration immediately or on some other fixed date;
2. It may refer the bill to a select committee of the House
3. It may refer the bill to a joint committee of the two Houses; and
4. It may circulate the bill to elicit public opinion.

A Select Committee consists of members of the House where the bill has originated and a joint committee consists of members of both the Houses of parliament.

b) Committee Stage

The usual practice is receiving the bill to a select committee of the House. This committee examines the bill thoroughly and in detail, clause by clause. It can also amend its provisions, but without altering the principles underlying it. After completing the scrutiny and discussion, the committee, reports the bill back to the House.

c) Consideration Stage

The House, after receiving the bill from the select committee, considers the provisions of the bill clause by clause. Each clause is discussed and voted upon separately. The member can also move amendments and if accepted, they become part of the bill.

3. Third Reading

At this stage, the debate is confined to the acceptance or rejection of the bill as whole and no amendments are allowed, as the general principles underlying the bill have already been scrutinised during the stage of second reading. If the majority of members present and voting accept the bill, the bill is regarded as

passed by the House. Thereafter, the bill is authenticated by the presiding officer of the House and transmitted to the second House for consideration and approval. A bill is deemed to have been passed by the Parliament only when both the Houses have agreed to it, either with or without amendments.

4. Bill in the Second House

In the second House also, the bill passes through all the three stages, that is, first reading, second reading and third reading. There are four alternatives before this House:

- a) It may pass the bill as sent by the first house (ie, without amendments);
- b) It may pass the bill with amendments and return it to the first House for reconsideration;
- c) It may reject the bill altogether; and
- d) It may not take any action and thus keep the bill pending.

If the second House passes the bill without any amendments or the first House accepts the amendments suggested by the second House, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses and the same is sent to the president for his assent. On the other hand, if the first House rejects the amendments suggested by the second House or the second House rejects the bill altogether or the second House does not take any action for six months, a deadlock is deemed to have taken place. To resolve such a deadlock, the president can summon a joint sitting of the two Houses. If the majority of members present and voting in the majority of members present and voting in the joint sitting approves the bill, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses.

5. Assent of the President

Every bill after being passed by both House of Parliament either singly or at a joint sitting, is presented to the president for his assent. There are three alternatives before the president:

- a) he may give his assent to the bill; or
- b) he may withhold his assent to the bill; or
- c) he may return the bill for reconsideration of the Houses.

If the president gives his assent to the bill, the bill becomes an act and is placed on the statute Book. If the President withholds his assent to the bill, it ends and

does not become an act. If the President returns the bill for reconsideration and if it is passed by both the House again with or without amendments and presented to the President for his assent, the president must give his assent to the bill. Thus, the president enjoys only a “suspensive veto”.

Money Bills

Article 110 of the Constitution deals with the definition of money bills. It states that a bill is deemed to be a money bill if it contain ‘only’ provisions dealing with all or any of the following matters:

- 1) The imposition, abolition, remission, alteration or regulation of any tax;
- 2) The regulation of the borrowing of money by the Union government;
- 3) The custody of the Consolidated Fund of India or the contingency fund of India, the payment of moneys into or the withdrawal of money from any such fund;
- 4) The appropriation of money out of the consolidated Fund of India;
- 5) Declaration of any expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or increasing the amount of any such expenditure;
- 6) The receipt of money on account of the Consolidated Fund of India or the public account of India or the custody or issue of such money, or the audit of the accounts of the Union or of a state; or
- 7) Any matter incidental to any of the matters specified above.

However, a bill is not to be deemed to be a money bill by reason only that it provides for:

1. the imposition of fines or other pecuniary penalties, or
2. the demand or payment or fees for licenses or fees for services rendered;
3. the imposition, abolition, remission, alteration or regulations of any tax by any local authority or body for local purposes.

If any question arises whether a bill is a money bill or not, the decision of the speaker of the Lok Sabha is final. His decision in this regard cannot be questioned in any court of law or in the either House of Parliament or even the presented to the Rajya Sabha for recommendation and presented to the president for assent, the Speaker endorses it as a money bill.

The Constitution lays down a special procedure for the passing of money bills in the Parliament. A money bill can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha and that too on the recommendation of the president. Every such bill is considered to be a government bill and can be introduced only by a minister.

After a money bill is passed by the Lok Sabha, it is transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its consideration. The Rajya Sabha has restricted powers with regard to a money bill. It cannot reject or amend a money bill. It can only make the recommendations. It must return the bill to the Lok Sabha within 14 days, whether with or without recommendations of the Rajya Sabha.

If the Lok Sabha accepts any recommendation, the bill is then deemed to have been passed by both the Houses in the modified form. If the Lok Sabha does not accept any recommendation, the bill is then deemed to have passed by both the Houses in the form originally passed by the Lok Sabha without any change.

If the Rajya Sabha does not return the bill to the Lok Sabha within 14 days, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses in the form originally passed by the Lok Sabha. Thus, the Lok Sabha has more powers than Rajya Sabha with regard to a money bill. On the other hand, both the Houses have equal powers with regard to an ordinary bill.

Finally, when a money bill is presented to the president, he may either give his assent to the bill or withhold his assent to the bill but cannot return the bill for reconsideration of the houses. Normally, the president gives his assent to a money bill as it is introduced in the Parliament with his prior permission.

Table shows the differences between the procedures for the enactment of ordinary bills and money bills.

Financial Bills

Financial bills are those bills that deal with fiscal matters, that is , revenue or expenditure.

Ordinary Bills	Money Bill
It can be introduced either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha	It can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha and not in the Rajya Sabha.

It can be introduced either by a minister or by private member	It can be introduced only by a minister
It is introduced without the recommendation of the president	It can be introduced only on the recommendation of the President.
It can be amended or rejected by the Rajya Sabha.	It cannot be amended or rejected by the Rajya Sabha. The Rajya Sabha should return the bill with or without recommendations, which may be accepted or rejected by the Lok Sabha.
It can be detained by the Rajya Sabha for a maximum period of six months.	It can be detained by the Rajya Sabha for a maximum period of 14 days only.
It does not require the certification of the speaker when transmitted to the Rajya Sabha (if it has originated in the Lok Sabha).	It requires the certification of the Speaker when transmitted to the Rajya Sabha.
It is sent for the President's assent only after being approved by both the Houses. In case of a deadlock due to disagreement between the two Houses, a joint sitting of both the houses can be summoned by the president to resolve the deadlock.	It is sent for the President's assent even if it is approved by only Lok Sabha. There is no chance of any disagreement between the two Houses and hence, there is no provision of joint sitting of both the Houses in this regard.
Its defeat in the Lok Sabha may lead to the resignation of the government (if it is introduced by a minister).	Its defeat in the Lok Sabha leads to the resignation of government.
It can be rejected, approved, or returned for reconsideration by the President.	It can be rejected or approved but cannot be returned for reconsideration by the President.

However, the constitution uses the term 'financial bill' in a technical sense. Financial bills are of three kinds:

1. Money bills - Article 110
2. Financial bills (I)-Article 117(1)
3. Financial bills (II) - Article 117 (3)

This classification implies that money bills are simply a species of financial bills. Hence, all money bills are financial bills. but all financial bills are not money bills. Only those financial bills are money bills which contain

exclusively those matters which are mentioned in Article 110 of the Constitution. These are also certified by the Speaker of Lok Sabha as money bills. The financial bills (I) and (II), on the other hand, have been dealt with in article 117 of the Constitution.

Financial Bills (I)

A financial bill (I) is a bill that contains not only any or all the matters mentioned in Article 110, but also other matters of general legislation. For instance, a bill that contains a borrowing clause, but does not exclusively deal with borrowing. In two respects, a financial bill (I) is similar to a money bill – (a) both of them can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha and not in the Rajya Sabha, and (b) both of them can be introduced only on the recommendation of the president. In all other respects, a financial bill (I) is governed by the same legislative procedure applicable to an ordinary bill. Hence, it can be either rejected or amended by the Rajya Sabha (except that an amendment other than for reduction or abolition of a tax cannot be moved in either House without the recommendation of the president i.e., the recommendation of president is not required for moving an amendment making provision for the reduction or abolition of a tax). In case of a disagreement between the two House over such a bill, the president can summon a joint sitting of the two Houses to resolve the deadlock. When the bill is presented to the President, he can either give his assent to the bill or withhold his assent to the bill or return the bill for reconsideration of the Houses.

Financial Bills (II)

A financial bill (II) contains provisions involving expenditure from the consolidated fund of India, but does not include any of the matters mentioned in Article 110. It is treated as an ordinary bill and in all respects, it is governed by the same legislative procedure which is applicable to an ordinary bill. The only special feature of this bill is that it cannot be passed by either House of Parliament unless the President has recommended to that the consideration of the bill. Hence, financial bill (II) can be introduced in either House of Parliament and recommendation of the president is not necessary for its introduction, In other words, the recommendation of the president is not required at the introduction stage but is required at the consideration stage. It can be either rejected or amended by either House of Parliament. In case of a disagreement between the two Houses over such a bill, the president can summon a joint sitting of the two Houses to resolve the deadlock. when the

bill is presented to the president, he can either give his assent to the bill or withhold his assent to the bill or return the bill for reconsideration of the Houses.

JOINT SITTING OF TWO HOUSES

Joint sitting is an extraordinary machinery provided by the Constitution to resolve a dead-lock between the two Houses over the passage of a bill. A deadlock is deemed to have taken place under any one of the following three situations after a bill has been passed by one House and transmitted to the other House:

1. if the bill is rejected by the other House;
2. if the Houses have finally disagreed as to the amendments to be made in the bill; or
3. if more than six months have elapsed from the date of the receipt of the bill by the other House without the bill being passed by it.

In the above three situations, the president can summon both the Houses to meet in a joint sitting for the purpose of deliberating and voting on the bill. It must be noted here that the provision of joint sitting is applicable to ordinary bills or financial bills only and not to money bills or Constitutional amendment bills. In the case of a money bill, the Lok Sabha has overriding powers, while a Constitutional amendment bill must be passed by each House separately.

In reckoning the period of six months, no account can be taken of any period during which the other House (to which the bill has been sent) is prorogued or adjourned for more than four consecutive days. If the bill (under dispute) has already lapsed due to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, no joint sitting can be summoned. But, the joint sitting can be held if the Lok Sabha is dissolved after the President has notified his intention to summon such a sitting (as the bill does not lapse in this case). After the President notifies his intention to summon a joint sitting of the two Houses, none of the Houses can proceed further with the bill.

The Speaker of Lok Sabha presides over a joint sitting of the two Houses and the Deputy Speaker, in his absence. If the Deputy Speaker is also absent from a joint sitting, the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha presides. If he is also absent, such other person as may be determined by the members present at the

joint sitting, presides over the meeting. It is clear that the Chairman of Rajya Sabha does not preside over a joint sitting as he is not a member of either House of Parliament. The quorum to constitute a joint sitting is one-tenth of the total number of members of the two Houses. The joint sitting is governed by the Rules of Procedure of Lok Sabha and not of Rajya Sabha. If the bill in dispute is passed by a majority of the total number of members of both the Houses present and voting in the joint sitting, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses. Normally, the Lok Sabha with greater number wins the battle in a joint sitting. The Constitution has specified that at a joint sitting, new amendments to the bill cannot be proposed except in two cases:

1. those amendments that have caused final disagreement between the Houses; and
2. those amendments that might have become necessary due to the delay in the passage of the bill.

Since 1950, the provision regarding the joint sitting of the two Houses has been invoked only thrice. The bills that have been passed at joint sittings are:

1. Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1960.²⁰
2. Banking Service Commission (Repeal) Bill, 1977.²¹
3. Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002.²²

❖ PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES

MEANING

The Parliament is too unwieldy a body to deliberate effectively the issues that come up before it. The functions of the Parliament are varied, complex and voluminous. Moreover, it has neither the adequate time nor necessary expertise to make a detailed scrutiny of all legislative measures and other matters. Therefore, it is assisted by a number of committees in the discharge of its duties.

The Constitution of India makes a mention of these committees at different places, but without making any specific provisions regarding their composition, tenure, functions, etc. All these matters are dealt by the rules of two Houses. Accordingly, a parliamentary committee means a committee that:

1. Is appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker / Chairman¹
 2. Works under the direction of the Speaker / Chairman
 3. Presents its report to the House or to the Speaker / Chairman
 4. Has a secretariat provided by the Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha
- The consultative committees, which also consist of members of Parliament, are not parliamentary committees as they do not fulfill above four conditions.²

CLASSIFICATION

Broadly, parliamentary committees are of two kinds—Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. The former are permanent (constituted every year or periodically) and work on a continuous basis, while the latter are temporary and cease to exist on completion of the task assigned to them.

Standing Committees

On the basis of the nature of functions performed by them, standing committees can be classified into the following six categories:

1. Financial Committees

- (a) Public Accounts Committee
- (b) Estimates Committee
- (c) Committee on Public Undertakings

2. Departmental Standing Committees (24)

3. Committees to Inquire

- (a) Committee on Petitions
- (b) Committee of Privileges
- (c) Ethics Committee

4. Committees to Scrutinise and Control

- (a) Committee on Government Assurances
- (b) Committee on Subordinate Legislation
- (c) Committee on Papers Laid on the Table
- (d) Committee on Welfare of SCs and STs
- (e) Committee on Empowerment of Women
- (f) Joint Committee³ on Offices of Profit

5. Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House

- a) Business Advisory Committee
- b) Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions
- c) Rules Committee
- d) Committee on Absence of Members from Sitzings of the House

6. House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees (i.e., Committees concerned with the Provision of Facilities and Services to Members):

- a) General Purposes Committee
- b) House Committee
- c) Library Committee
- d) Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members

Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees can be divided into two categories, that is, Inquiry Committees and Advisory Committees.

1. Inquiry Committees are constituted from time to time, either by the two Houses on a motion adopted in that behalf, or by the Speaker / Chairman, to inquire into and report on specific subjects. For example:
 - a. Committee on the Conduct of Certain Members during President's Address
 - b. Committee on Draft Five-Year Plan
 - c. Railway Convention Committee
 - d. Committee on Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)
 - e. Joint Committee on Bofors Contract
 - f. Joint Committee on Fertilizer Pricing
 - g. Joint Committee to Enquire into Irregularities in Securities and Banking Transactions
 - h. Joint Committee on Stock Market Scam
 - i. Joint Committee on Security in Parliament Complex
 - j. Committee on Provision of Computers to Members of Parliament, Offices of Political Parties and Officers of the Lok Sabha Secretariat
 - k. Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex

- l. Committee on Installation of Portraits / Statues of National Leaders and Parliamentarians in Parliament House Complex
 - m. Joint Committee on Maintenance of Heritage Character and Development of Parliament House Complex
 - n. Committee on Violation of Protocol Norms and Contemptuous Behaviour of Government Officers with Members of Lok Sabha
 - o. Joint Committee to Examine Matters Relating to Allocation and Pricing of Telecom Licences and Spectrum
2. Advisory Committees include select or joint committees on bills, which are appointed to consider and report on particular bills. These committees are distinguishable from the other ad hoc committees in as much as they are concerned with bills and the procedure to be followed by them is laid down in the Rules of Procedure and the Directions by the Speaker / Chairman.

When a Bill comes up before a House for general discussion, it is open to that House to refer it to a Select Committee of the House or a Joint Committee of the two Houses. A motion to this effect has to be moved and adopted in the House in which the Bill comes up for consideration. In case the motion adopted is for reference of the Bill to a Joint Committee, the decision is conveyed to the other House, requesting the members to nominate members of the other House to serve on the Committee.

The Select or Joint Committee considers the Bill clause by clause just as the two Houses do. Amendments to various clauses can be moved by members of the Committee. The Committee can also take evidence of associations, public bodies or experts who are interested in the Bill. After the Bill has thus been considered, the Committee submits its report to the House. Members who do not agree with the majority report may append their minutes of dissent to the report.

FINANCIAL COMMITTEES

Public Accounts Committee

This committee was set up first in 1921 under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1919 and has since been in existence. At present, it consists of 22 members (15 from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha). The members are elected by the Parliament every year from amongst its members according to the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. Thus, all parties get due representation in it.

The term of office of the members is one year. A minister cannot be elected as a member of the committee.

The chairman of the committee is appointed from amongst its members by the Speaker. Until 1966 - '67, the chairman of the committee belonged to the ruling party. However, since 1967 a convention has developed whereby the chairman of the committee is selected invariably from the Opposition. The function of the committee is to examine the annual audit reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), which are laid before the Parliament by the President. The CAG submits three audit reports to the President, namely, audit report on appropriation accounts, audit report on finance accounts and audit report on public undertakings.

The committee examines public expenditure not only from legal and formal point of view to discover technical irregularities but also from the point of view of economy, prudence, wisdom and propriety to bring out the cases of waste, loss, corruption, extravagance, inefficiency and nugatory expenses.

In more detail, the functions of the committee are:

- 1) To examine the appropriation accounts and the finance accounts of the Union government and any other accounts laid before the Lok Sabha. The appropriation accounts compare the actual expenditure with the expenditure sanctioned by the Parliament through the Appropriation Act, while the finance accounts shows the annual receipts and disbursements of the Union Government.
- 2) In scrutinising the appropriation accounts and the audit report of CAG on it, the committee has to satisfy itself that
 - a. The money that has been disbursed was legally available for the applied service or purpose
 - b. The expenditure conforms to the authority that governs it
 - c. Every re-appropriation has been made in accordance with the related rules
- 3) To examine the accounts of state corporations, trading concerns and manufacturing projects and the audit report of CAG on them (except those public undertakings which are allotted to the Committee on Public Undertakings)
- 4) To examine the accounts of autonomous and semiautonomous bodies, the audit of which is conducted by the CAG

- 5) To consider the report of the CAG relating to the audit of any receipt or to examine the accounts of stores and stocks
- 6) To examine the money spent on any service during a financial year in excess of the amount granted by the Lok Sabha for that purpose

In the fulfillment of the above functions, the committee is assisted by the CAG. In fact, the CAG acts as a guide, friend and philosopher of the committee.

On the role played by the committee, Ashok Chanda (who himself has been a CAG of India) observed: "Over a period of years, the committee has entirely fulfilled the expectation that it should develop into a powerful force in the control of public expenditure. It may be claimed that the traditions established and conventions developed by the Public Accounts Committee conform to the highest traditions of a parliamentary democracy."⁵

However, the effectiveness of the role of the committee is limited by the following:

- a) It is not concerned with the questions of policy in broader sense.
- b) It conducts a post-mortem examination of accounts (showing the expenditure already incurred).
- c) It cannot intervene in the matters of day-to-day administration.
- d) Its recommendations are advisory and not binding on the ministries.
- e) It is not vested with the power of disallowance of expenditures by the departments.
- f) It is not an executive body and hence, cannot issue an order. Only the Parliament can take a final decision on its findings.

Estimates Committee

The origin of this committee can be traced to the standing financial committee set up in 1921. The first Estimates Committee in the post-independence era was constituted in 1950 on the recommendation of John Mathai, the then finance minister. Originally, it had 25 members but in 1956 its membership was raised to 30. All the thirty members are from Lok Sabha only. The Rajya Sabha has no representation in this committee. These members are elected by the Lok Sabha every year from amongst its own members, according to the principles of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. Thus, all parties get due representation in it. The term of

office is one year. A minister cannot be elected as a member of the committee. The chairman of the committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst its members and he is invariably from the ruling party. The function of the committee is to examine the estimates included in the budget and suggest 'economies' in public expenditure. Hence, it has been described as a 'continuous economy committee'.

In more detail, the functions of the committee are:

- 1) To report what economies, improvements in organisation, efficiency and administrative reform consistent with the policy underlying the estimates, can be affected
- 2) To suggest alternative policies in order to bring about efficiency and economy in administration
- 3) To examine whether the money is well laid out within the limits of the policy implied in the estimates
- 4) To suggest the form in which the estimates are to be presented to Parliament

The Committee shall not exercise its functions in relation to such public undertakings as are allotted to the Committee on Public Undertakings. The Committee may continue the examination of the estimates from time to time, throughout the financial year and report to the House as its examination proceeds. It shall not be incumbent on the Committee to examine the entire estimates of any one year. The demands for grants may be finally voted despite the fact that the Committee has made no report.

However, the effectiveness of the role of the committee is limited by the following:

- a. It examines the budget estimates only after they have been voted by the Parliament, and not before that.
- b. It cannot question the policy laid down by the Parliament.
- c. Its recommendations are advisory and not binding on the ministries.
- d. It examines every year only certain selected ministries and departments. Thus, by rotation, it would cover all of them over a number of years.
- e. It lacks the expert assistance of the CAG which is available to the Public Accounts Committee.
- f. Its work is in the nature of a postmortem.

Committee on Public Undertakings This committee was created in 1964 on the recommendation of the Krishna Menon Committee. Originally, it had 15 members (10 from the Lok Sabha and 5 from the Rajya Sabha). However, in 1974, its membership was raised to 22 (15 from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha). The members of this committee are elected by the Parliament every year from amongst its own members according to the principle of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. Thus, all parties get due representation in it. The term of office of the members is one year. A minister cannot be elected as a member of the committee. The chairman of the committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst its members who are drawn from the Lok Sabha only. Thus, the members of the committee who are from the Rajya Sabha cannot be appointed as the chairman.

The functions of the committee are:

- 1) To examine the reports and accounts of public undertakings
- 2) To examine the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General on public undertakings
- 3) To examine (in the context of autonomy and efficiency of public undertakings) whether the affairs of the public undertakings are being managed in accordance with sound business principles and prudent commercial practices
- 4) To exercise such other functions vested in the public accounts committee and the estimates committee in relation to public undertakings which are allotted to it by the Speaker from time to time

The committee is not to examine and investigate any of the following:

- i. Matters of major government policy as distinct from business or commercial functions of the public undertakings
- ii. Matters of day-to-day administration
- iii. Matters for the consideration of which machinery is established by any special statute under which a particular public undertaking is established

Further, the effectiveness of the role of the committee is limited by the following:

- a) It cannot take up the examination of more than ten to twelve public undertakings in a year.
- b) Its work is in the nature of a post-mortem.
- c) It does not look into technical matters as its members are not technical experts.
- d) Its recommendations are advisory and not binding on the ministries.

DEPARTMENTAL STANDING COMMITTEES

On the recommendation of the Rules Committee of the Lok Sabha, 17 Departmentally-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) were set up in the Parliament in 1993.⁶ In 2004, seven more such committees were setup, thus increasing their number from 17 to 24.

The main objective of the standing committees is to secure more accountability of the Executive (i.e., the Council of Ministers) to the Parliament, particularly financial accountability. They also assist the Parliament in debating the budget more effectively.

The 24 standing committees cover under their jurisdiction all the ministries / departments of the Central Government.

Each standing committee consists of 31 members (21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha). The members of the Lok Sabha are nominated by the Speaker from amongst its own members, just as the members of the Rajya Sabha are nominated by the Chairman from amongst its members.

A minister is not eligible to be nominated as a member of any of the standing committees. In case a member, after his nomination to any of the standing committees, is appointed a minister, he then ceases to be a member of the committee. The term of office of each standing committee is one year from the date of its constitution. Out of the 24 standing committees, 8 work under the Rajya Sabha and 16 under the Lok Sabha.⁹ The 24 standing committees and the ministries / departments placed under their jurisdiction are shown below in Table

Sl. No	Name of the Committees	Ministries / Departments Covered
I. Committees under Rajya Sabha		
1.	Committee on Commerce	Commerce and Industry

2.	Committee on Home Affairs	1. Home Affairs 2. Development of NorthEastern Region
3.	Committee on Human Resource Development	1. Human Resource Development 2. Youth Affairs and Sports 3. Women and Child Development
4.	Committee on Industry	1. Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises 2. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
5.	Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests	1. Science and Technology 2. Space 3. Earth Sciences 4. Atomic Energy 5. Environment, Forests and Climate Change
6.	Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture	1. Civil Aviation 2. Road Transport & Highways 3. Shipping 4. Culture 5. Tourism
7.	Committee on Health & Family Welfare	1. Health and Family Welfare 2. Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)
8.	Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice	1. Law and Justice 2. Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
II. Committees under Lok Sabha		
9.	Committee on Agriculture	1. Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare 2. Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairing 3. Food Processing Industries
10.	Committee on Information Technology	1. Communication 2. Electronics & Information Technology 3. Information & Broadcasting
11.	Committee on Defence	Defence
12.	Committee on Energy	1. New and Renewable Energy 2. Power
13.	Committee on External Affairs	External Affairs

14.	Committee on Finance	1. Finance
		2. Corporate Affairs
		3. Planning
		4. Statistics and Programme Implementation
15.	Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution	Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
16.	Committee on Labour	1. Labour & Employment
		2. Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
		3. Textiles
17.	Committee on Petroleum & Natural Gas	Petroleum and Natural Gas
18.	Committee on Railways	Railways
19.	Committee on Urban Development	Housing and Urban Affairs
20.	Committee on Water Resources	Jal Shakti
21.	Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers	Chemicals and Fertilizers
22.	Committee on Rural Development	1. Rural Development
		2. Panchayati Raj
23.	Committee on Coal and Steel	Coal
		Mines
		Steel
24.	Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment	Social Justice and Empowerment
		Tribal Affairs
		Minority Affairs

The functions of each of the standing committees are:

1. To consider the demands for grants of the concerned ministries / departments before they are discussed and voted in the Lok Sabha. Its report should not suggest anything of the nature of cut motions
2. To examine bills pertaining to the concerned ministries / departments
3. To consider annual reports of ministries / departments

4. To consider national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses

The following limitations are imposed on the functioning of these standing committees:

- (i) They should not consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned ministries / departments.
- (ii) To consider national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses The following limitations are imposed on the functioning of these standing committees: (i) They should not consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned ministries / departments.

It should be noted here that the recommendations of these committees are advisory in nature and hence not binding on the Parliament.

The following procedure shall be followed by each of the standing committees in their consideration of the demands for grants, and making a report thereon to the Houses.

- a. After general discussion on the budget in the Houses is over, the Houses shall be adjourned for a fixed period.
- b. The committees shall consider the demands for grants of the concerned ministries during the aforesaid period.
- c. The committees shall make their report within the period and shall not ask for more time.
- d. The demands for grants shall be considered by the House in the light of the reports of the committees.
- e. There shall be a separate report on the demands for grants of each ministry.

The following procedure shall be followed by each of the standing committees in examining the bills and making report thereon.

- a. The committee shall consider the general principles and clauses of bills referred to it.
- b. The Committee shall consider only such bills as introduced in either of the Houses and referred to it.
- c. The Committee shall make report on bills in a given time.

The merits of the standing committee system in the Parliament are:

- (1) Their proceedings are devoid of any party bias.
- (2) The procedure adopted by them is more flexible than in the Lok Sabha.
- (3) The system makes parliamentary control over executive much more detailed, close, continuous, in-depth and comprehensive.
- (4) The system ensures economy and efficiency in public expenditure as the ministries / departments would now be more careful in formulating their demands.
- (5) They facilitate opportunities to all the members of Parliament to participate and understand the functioning of the government and contribute to it.
- (6) They can avail of expert opinion or public opinion to make the reports. They are authorised to invite experts and eminent persons to testify before them and incorporate their opinions in their reports.
- (7) The opposition parties and the Rajya Sabha can now play a greater role in exercising financial control over the executive.

COMMITTEES TO INQUIRE

Committee on Petitions

This committee examines petitions on bills and on matters of general public importance. It also entertains representations from individuals and associations on matters pertaining to Union subjects. The Lok Sabha committee consists of 15 members, while the Rajya Sabha committee consists of 10 members.

Committee of Privileges

The functions of this committee are semi-judicial in nature. It examines the cases of breach of privileges of the House and its members and recommends appropriate action. The Lok Sabha committee has 15 members, while the Rajya Sabha committee has 10 members.

Ethics Committee

This committee was constituted in Rajya Sabha in 1997 and in Lok Sabha in 2000. It enforces the code of conduct of members of Parliament. It examines

the cases of misconduct and recommends appropriate action. Thus, it is engaged in maintaining discipline and decorum in Parliament.

COMMITTEES TO SCRUTINISE AND CONTROL

Committee on Government Assurances

This committee examines the assurances, promises and undertakings given by ministers from time to time on the floor of the House and reports on the extent to which they have been carried through. In the Lok Sabha, it consists of 15 members and in the Rajya Sabha, it consists of 10 members. It was constituted in 1953.

Committee on Subordinate Legislation

This committee examines and reports to the House whether the powers to make regulations, rules, sub-rules and bye-laws delegated by the Parliament or conferred by the Constitution to the Executive are being properly exercised by it. In both the Houses, the committee consists of 15 members. It was constituted in 1953.

Committee on Papers Laid on the Table

This committee was constituted in 1975. The Lok Sabha Committee has 15 members, while the Rajya Sabha Committee has 10 members. It examines all papers laid on the table of the House by ministers to see whether they comply with provisions of the Constitution, or the related Act or Rule. It does not examine statutory notifications and orders that fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

Committee on Welfare of SCs and STs

This committee consists of 30 members (20 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha). Its functions are: (i) to consider the reports of the National Commission for the SCs and the National Commission for the STs; (ii) to examine all matters relating to the welfare of SCs and STs, like implementation of constitutional and statutory safeguards, working of welfare programmes, etc.

Committee on Empowerment of Women

This committee was constituted in 1997 and consists of 30 members (20 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha). It considers the reports of the National Commission for Women and examines the measures taken by the Union Government to secure status, dignity and equality for women in all fields.

Joint Committee on Offices of Profit

This committee examines the composition and character of committees and other bodies appointed by the Central, state and union territory governments and recommends whether persons holding these offices should be disqualified from being elected as members of Parliament or not. It consists of 15 members (10 from Lok Sabha and 5 from Rajya Sabha).

COMMITTEES RELATING TO THE DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Business Advisory Committee

This committee regulates the programme and time table of the House. It allocates time for the transaction of legislative and other business brought before the House by the government. The Lok Sabha committee consists of 15 members including the Speaker as its chairman. In the Rajya Sabha, it has 11 members including the Chairman as its exofficio chairman.

Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions

This committee classifies bills and allocates time for the discussion on bills and resolutions introduced by private members (other than ministers). This is a special committee of the Lok Sabha and consists of 15 members including the Deputy Speaker as its chairman. The Rajya Sabha does not have any such committee. The same function in the Rajya Sabha is performed by the Business Advisory Committee of that House.

Rules Committee

This committee considers the matters of procedure and conduct of business in the House and recommends necessary amendments or additions to the rules of the House. The Lok Sabha committee consists of 15 members including the Speaker as its ex-officio chairman. In the Rajya Sabha, it consists of 16 members including the Chairman as its ex-officio chairman.

Committee on Absence of Members

This committee considers all applications from members for leave of absence from the sittings of the House, and examines the cases of members who have been absent for a period of 60 days or more without permission. It is a special committee of the Lok Sabha and consists of 15 members. There is no such committee in the Rajya Sabha and all such matters are dealt by the House itself.

HOUSE-KEEPING COMMITTEES

General Purposes Committee

This committee considers and advises on matters concerning affairs of the House, which do not fall within the jurisdiction of any other parliamentary committee. In each House, this committee consists of the presiding officer (Speaker / Chairman) as its ex-officio chairman, Deputy Speaker (Deputy Chairman in the case of Rajya Sabha), members of panel of chairpersons (panel of vicechairpersons in the case of Rajya Sabha), chairpersons of all the departmental standing committees of the House, leaders of recognised parties and groups in the House and such other members as nominated by the presiding officer.

House Committee

This committee deals with residential accommodation of members and other amenities like food, medical aid, etc., accorded to them in their houses and hostels in Delhi. Both the Houses have their respective House Committees. In the Lok Sabha, it consists of 12 members.

Library Committee

This committee considers all matters relating to library of the Parliament and assists the members in utilising the library's services. It consists of nine members (six from Lok Sabha and three from Rajya Sabha).

Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members

This committee was constituted under the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954. It consists of 15 members (10 from Lok Sabha and 5 from Rajya Sabha). It frames rules for regulating payment of salary, allowances and pension to members of Parliament.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

Consultative committees are attached to various ministries / departments of the Central Government. They consist of members of both the Houses of Parliament. The Minister / Minister of State in charge of the Ministry concerned acts as the chairman of the consultative committee of that ministry.

These committees provide a forum for informal discussions between the ministers and the members of Parliament on policies and programmes of the government and the manner of their implementation.

These committees are constituted by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. The guidelines regarding the composition, functions and procedures of these committees are formulated by this Ministry. The Ministry also makes arrangements for holding their meetings both during the session and the inter-session period of Parliament.

The membership of these committees is voluntary and is left to the choice of the members and the leaders of their parties. The maximum membership of a committee is 30 and the minimum is 10.

These committees are normally constituted after the new Lok Sabha is constituted, after General Elections for the Lok Sabha. In other words, these committees shall stand dissolved upon dissolution of every Lok Sabha and shall be reconstituted upon constitution of each Lok Sabha.

In addition, separate Informal Consultative Committees of the members of Parliament are also constituted for all the Railway Zones. Members of Parliament belonging to the area falling under a particular Railway Zone are nominated on the Informal Consultative Committee of that Railway Zone.

Unlike the Consultative Committees attached to various ministries / departments, the meetings of the Informal Consultative Committees are to be arranged during the session periods only.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A Minister is not eligible for election or nomination to the Financial Committees, Departmental Standing Committees, and Committees on Empowerment of Women, Government Assurances, Petitions, Subordinate Legislation and Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3. Consultative Committees are explained at the end of this Chapter.

4. A joint committee consists of members of both the Houses of Parliament. The Railway Convention Committee, 1949 was the first Committee after independence. This Committee and subsequent Committees confined themselves to determining the Rate of Dividend payable by the Railways to General Revenues. Since 1971, the Railway Convention Committees have been taking up subjects which have a bearing on the working of the Railways and Railway Finances.

5. Ashok Chanda: Indian Administration, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1967, P. 180.

6. In 1989, three Standing Committees were constituted which dealt with Agriculture, Science & Technology and Environment & Forests. In 1993, they were superseded by the Departmentally-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs).

7. While inaugurating the Standing Committee system in the Central Hall of Parliament on 31st March 1993, the then Vice-President of India and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, K.R. Narayanan observed that the main purpose of these Committees is: "to ensure the accountability of Government to Parliament through more detailed consideration of measures in these Committees. The intention is not to weaken or criticise the administration

but to strengthen it by investing it with more meaningful Parliamentary support”.

8. Till 13th Lok Sabha, each Standing Committee consisted of not more than 45 members - 30 to be nominated by the Speaker from amongst the members of Lok Sabha and 15 to be nominated by the Chairman from amongst the members of Rajya Sabha. However, with restructuring of DRSCs in July 2004, each DRSC consists of 31 members - 21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha.
9. The procedure regarding constitution and functioning of DRSCs, serviced by Lok Sabha, has been enumerated in Rules 331C to 331Q of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha. Rules 268 to 277 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha govern DRSCs serviced by Rajya Sabha.

PARLIAMENTARY FORUMS ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORUMS

The first Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management was constituted in the year 2005.¹ Subsequently, seven more Parliamentary forums were constituted. At present, there are eight Parliamentary forums.²

1. Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management (2005)
2. Parliamentary Forum on Youth (2006)
3. Parliamentary Forum on Children (2006)
4. Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health (2006)
5. Parliamentary Forum on Global Warming and Climate Change (2008)
6. Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management (2011)
7. Parliamentary Forum on Artisans and Crafts-people (2013)
8. Parliamentary Forum on Millennium Development Goals (2013)

OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUMS

The objectives behind the constitution of the Parliamentary forums are:

- (i) To provide a platform to the members to have interactions with the ministers concerned, experts and key officials from the nodal ministries

with a view to have a focused and meaningful discussion on critical issues with a result-oriented approach for speeding up the implementation process;

- (ii) To sensitise members about the key areas of concern and also about the ground level situation and equip them with the latest information, knowledge, technical know-how and valuable inputs from experts both from the country and abroad for enabling them to raise these issues effectively on the Floor of the House and in the meetings of the Departmentally-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs); and
- (iii) To prepare a data-base through collection of data on critical issues from ministries concerned, reliable NGOs, newspapers, United Nations, Internet, etc. and circulation thereof to the members so that they can meaningfully participate in the discussions of the forums and seek clarifications from experts or officials from the Ministry present in the meetings.

It has been mandated that the Parliamentary Fora will not interfere with or encroach upon the jurisdiction of the Departmentally-Related Standing Committees of the Ministry/ Department concerned.

COMPOSITION OF THE FORUMS

The Speaker of Lok Sabha is the ex-officio President of all the Forums except the Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health wherein the Chairman of Rajya Sabha is the ex-officio President and the Speaker is the ex-officio Co-President. The Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, the concerned Ministers and the Chairman of Departmentally-Related Standing Committees are the ex-officio VicePresidents of the respective Forums.

Each Forum consists of not more than 31 members (excluding the President, Co-President and Vice-Presidents) out of whom not more than 21 are from the Lok Sabha and not more than 10 are from the Rajya Sabha.

Members (other than the President, Co-President and VicePresidents) of these forums are nominated by the Speaker/ Chairman from amongst the leaders of various political parties/groups or their nominees, who have special knowledge/keen interest in the subject.³

The duration of the office of members of the forum is coterminus with their membership in the respective Houses. A member may also resign from the forum by writing to the Speaker/Chairman.

The President of the forum appoints a member-convenor for each forum to conduct regular, approved programmes/meetings of the forum in consultation with the President. The meetings of the forums are held from time to time, as may be necessary, during Parliament sessions.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FORUMS

Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management

The functions of the forum are:

1. To identify problems relating to water and make suggestions/recommendations for consideration and appropriate action by Government/organisations concerned
2. To identify the ways of involving members of Parliament in conservation and augmentation of water resources in their respective states/constituencies
3. To organise seminars/workshops to create awareness for conservation and efficient management of water
4. To undertake such other related task as it may deem fit

Parliamentary Forum on Youth

The functions of this forum are:

1. To have focused deliberations on strategies to leverage human capital in the youth for accelerating development initiatives
2. To build greater awareness amongst public leaders and at the grass-roots level of the potential of youth for effecting socio-economic change
3. To interact on a regular basis with youth representatives and leaders, in order to better appreciate their hopes, aspirations, concerns and problems
4. To consider ways for improving Parliament's out-reach to different sections of youth, in order to reinforce their faith and commitment in democratic institutions and encourage their active participation therein

5. To hold consultations with experts, national and international academicians and government agencies concerned on redesigning of public policy in the matter of youth empowerment.⁴

Parliamentary Forum on Children

The functions of the forum are:

1. To further enhance awareness and attention of Parliamentarians towards critical issues affecting children's well being so that they may provide due leadership to ensure their rightful place in the development process
2. To provide a platform to Parliamentarians to exchange ideas, views, experiences, expert practices in relation to children, in a structured manner, through workshops, seminars, orientation programmes, etc.
3. To provide Parliamentarians an interface with civil society for highlighting children's issues, including, inter-alia, the voluntary sector, media and corporate sector, and thereby to foster effective strategic partnerships in this regard
4. To enable Parliamentarians to interact, in an institutionalised manner with specialised UN agencies like the UNICEF and other comparable multilateral agencies on expert reports, studies, news and trend-analyses, etc., world-wide, which are germane to developments in the sector
5. To undertake any other tasks, projects, assignments, etc., as the Forum may deem fit.

Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management

The functions of the forum are:

1. To identify problems relating to Disaster Management and make suggestions / recommendations for consideration and appropriate action by the Government / Organizations concerned to reduce the effects of disasters.
2. To identify the ways of involving Members of Parliament to interact with specialists of National and International Bodies working on Disaster Management with increased effort to develop new technologies to mitigate the effect of disasters.
3. To organize seminars / workshops to create awareness about the causes and effects of disasters among the Members of Parliament.
4. To identify the ways of involving Members of Parliament to spread awareness about disaster management.

5. To undertake such other related task as it may deem fit.

Parliamentary Forum on Artisans and Craftspeople

The functions of the forum are:

1. To further enhance awareness and attention to Parliamentarians towards critical issues affecting artisans and craftspeople so as to preserve and promote traditional art and crafts through various mechanisms.
2. To provide a platform to Parliamentarians to exchange ideas, views, experiences, expertise and best practices in relation to artisans and craftspeople, in a structured manner, through Workshops, Seminars, Orientation Programmes, etc.
3. To provide Parliamentarians an interface with civil society for highlighting issues related to craftspeople and artisans, including inter alia, the Voluntary Sector, Media and Corporate Sector and thereby to foster effective strategic partnerships in this regard
4. To enable Parliamentarians to interact, in an institutionalized manner with representatives of various Union Ministries, Government Organizations like Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Coir Board, The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) and other related Organizations/Bodies.
5. To hold comprehensive dialogue and discussion on the matters relating to preservation of art and traditional craft and the promotion of artisans and craftspeople with experts/Organizations at the national and international levels.
6. To undertake any other Tasks, Projects, Assignments, etc. as the Forum may deem fit.

Parliamentary Forum on Millennium Development Goals

The functions of the forum are:

1. To review and enhance awareness and attention of Parliamentarians towards critical issues which have bearing on achievement of goals/targets set under Millennium Development Goals by 2015.
2. To provide a platform to Parliamentarians to exchange ideas, views, experiences, expertise and best practices in relation to implementation of Millennium Development Goals in a structured manner, through Workshops, Seminars, Orientation Programmes, etc.

3. To provide Parliamentarians an interface with civil society for highlighting issues related to Millennium Development Goals, viz. eradication of poverty; hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/ AIDS; Malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.
4. To enable parliamentarians to interact, in an institutionalized manner with specialized UN Agencies and other comparable Multilateral Agencies, Expert Report, Studies, News and Trendanalyses, etc. regarding achievement of Millennium Development Goals.
5. To undertake any other Tasks, Projects, Assignments, etc. as the Forum may deem fit.

❖ PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Rationale of the group

M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakhder have nicely explained the rationale of the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) in the following way:

The establishment and development of relations among parliaments constitutes part of the regular activities of national parliaments. Although promotion of inter-parliamentary relations has for many years been a significant part of the work of parliamentarians, recently it has received a new thrust due to the increased inter-dependence of nations in a global environment. It is imperative that parliamentarians will join hands to safeguard democracy and work in synergy to confront the challenges before the world and convert them into opportunities to facilitate peace and prosperity in their countries as well as globally. Parliamentarians from different parts of the world, therefore, have a forum where they can meet to discuss and find out solutions to their common problems. It is here that some sort of crossfertilisation of ideas can take place not only between the older and the younger parliaments, but also between parliamentarians working under different parliamentary systems. These problems are no doubt discussed in inter-governmental conferences; however, those discussions are not so frank and free as they can be at a conclave of legislators.

Inter-parliamentary relations thus assume great importance today when the whole world is beset with many pressing problems. The problems that are faced by one parliament today may confront another tomorrow. It is, therefore, essential that a link should exist between various parliaments of the world. This link is maintained by India through the exchange of delegations, goodwill missions, correspondence, documents, etc. with foreign parliaments through the machinery of the IPG that acts both as the National Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and also as the India Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

IPG³ is an autonomous body. It was formed in the year 1949 in pursuance of a motion adopted by the Constituent Assembly (Legislative).⁴ The membership of IPG is open to all members of Parliament.

The former members of Parliament can also become associate members of the Group.⁵ But, the associate members are entitled to limited rights only. They are not entitled to representation at meetings and conferences of the IPU and the CPA. They are also not entitled to the travel concessions provided to members by certain branches of the CPA.

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha is the ex officio president of the Group. The Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha are the ex officio vice-presidents of the Group. The Secretary General of the Lok Sabha acts as the ex officio Secretary-General of the Group.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP

The aims and objects of the Group are mentioned below:

1. To promote personal contacts between members of the Parliament of India.
2. To study questions of public importance that are likely to come up before the Parliament; arrange seminars, discussions and orientation courses; and bring out publications for the dissemination of information to the members of the Group.
3. To arrange lectures on political, defence, economic, social and educational problems by the members of the Parliament and distinguished persons.

4. To arrange visits to foreign countries with a view to develop contacts with members of other parliaments.

FUNCTIONS OF THE GROUP

The various functions performed and activities undertaken by the Group are as follows:

1. The Group acts as a link between the Parliament of India and the various parliaments of the world. This link is maintained through exchange of delegations, goodwill missions, correspondence, documents, etc. with foreign parliaments.
2. The Group functions as the (a) National Group of the IPU and (b) main branch of the CPA in India.
3. Addresses to the members of the Parliament by visiting Heads of State and Government of foreign countries and talks by eminent persons are arranged under the auspices of the Group.
4. Seminars and symposia on parliamentary subjects of topical interest are organised periodically at national as well as international level.
5. Members of the Group, when visiting abroad, are given letters of introduction to the Secretaries of the National Groups of the IPU and Secretaries of the CPA branches. The Indian Missions in the countries of visit are also suitably informed so as to enable them to get assistance and usual courtesies.
6. Only those members of the Parliament who are members of the Group of at least six months' standing at the time of the composition of the delegation, may be included in the Indian Parliamentary delegations to foreign countries.
7. An uninterrupted flow of information to members regarding the activities of the Group is maintained through the IPG Newsletter brought out every quarter. It is sent regularly to all members of the Group, including associate members.
8. As per decision of the Group, an award of Outstanding Parliamentarian was instituted in the year 1995 to be given annually. A committee of five persons, constituted by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, invites and finalises the nomination for the award.
9. To encourage bilateral relations, the Group constitutes Parliamentary Friendship Groups with other countries in the Parliament. The aims and objectives of the Friendship Group are to maintain political, social and cultural contacts between the two countries and to assist in exchanges of

information and experiences on issues relating to parliamentary activities.

THE GROUP AND IPU

The IPU is an international organisation of the parliaments of sovereign states. At present, the IPU consists of 153 parliaments of sovereign nations. Its aim is to work for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative institutions. It fosters contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all member countries and contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions. It also expresses its views on all burning questions of international importance for necessary effective implementation of parliamentary actions and suggests avenues for improving the working standard and capacity of international institutions.

The main advantages of membership of the Group, insofar as its functions as the National Group of the IPU are concerned, are as follows:

1. It helps members of Indian Parliamentary delegations to develop contacts with the parliamentarians of the member countries of the IPU.
2. The events provide an opportunity to study and understand contemporary changes/reforms taking place in various countries of the world.
3. It provides facilities to meet parliamentarians in different countries during tours in abroad or in India when visiting Parliamentarians are here.
4. The members of the Group are eligible to visit foreign countries as members of the Indian Parliamentary delegations to Inter-Parliamentary Conferences.

In the recent past, members of the Group have been holding various positions in the IPU bodies, namely, office bearers in different committees of the IPU, Rapporteurs, Chairman of Drafting Committees, etc. and by virtue of the same, the Group has been successful in putting forward effectively the view point of India on various important issues dealt in the IPU meetings.

THE GROUP AND CPA

The CPA is an association of about 17000 Commonwealth Parliamentarians spread over 175 National, State, Provincial and Territorial Parliaments. Its aims are to promote knowledge and understanding of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural systems within a parliamentary democratic framework with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations and to countries having close historical and parliamentary associations with it. Its mission is to promote the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance and by building an informed parliamentary community able to deepen the Commonwealth's democratic commitment and to further cooperation among its parliaments and legislatures. The main advantages of membership of the Group, insofar as its functions as the main branch of the CPA in India are concerned, are as follows:

- 1. Conferences and Seminars:** Membership provides an opportunity for participation in the plenary and regional conferences, seminars, visits and exchanges of delegations.
- 2. Publications:** All members of the Group are entitled to receive, free of charge, 'The Parliamentarian' quarterly and the newsletter, 'First Reading', every second month.
- 3. Information:** The Parliamentary Information and Reference Centre of the CPA Secretariat provides information to members on parliamentary, constitutional and Commonwealth matters.
- 4. Introductions:** The CPA branches readily assist in arranging introductions for members visiting other jurisdictions.
- 5. Parliamentary Facilities:** Members visiting other Commonwealth countries are normally accorded parliamentary courtesies, especially access to debates and local members.
- 6. Travel Facilities:** Some branches provide for a designated number of their members annually to undertake study tours of Commonwealth and other countries to compare political and procedural developments. Other branches arrange ad hoc visits.