Polity & Governance · GS - II

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

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees, legislative scrutiny, financial accountability, demands for grants, ministry oversight, bipartisan deliberation, expert evidence, Public Accounts Committee, committee reports, non-binding recommendations, attendance and transparency.

Model Answer

Introduction

Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSCs) strengthen parliamentary oversight by examining legislation, departmental policies and demands for grants in a relatively detailed setting.

How They Improve Accountability

- **Detailed scrutiny:** Committees examine bills and policies beyond the limited time available during parliamentary debates.
- **Financial oversight:** Their examination of demands for grants helps assess departmental priorities and expenditure.
- **Expert consultation:** Committees can obtain evidence from officials, specialists and stakeholders.
- **Bipartisan deliberation:** Smaller forums may encourage cross-party discussion and reasoned recommendations.

- **Administrative accountability:** Ministries must respond to committee observations, increasing scrutiny of implementation and performance.

Illustrations

The Public Accounts Committee examines reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General to identify financial irregularities. Department-related committees have also scrutinised legislation and sectoral policies, helping Parliament identify implementation gaps.

Limitations

Committee recommendations are generally not binding. Referral of bills to committees is not universal, while limited research support, irregular attendance, political polarisation and delayed action on recommendations weaken effectiveness. Confidential proceedings can also limit public awareness.

Way Forward

Increase referrals of significant bills, strengthen research support, improve attendance, publish action-taken reports promptly and enable systematic follow-up of recommendations.

Conclusion

Parliamentary committees are valuable instruments of legislative control, but their effectiveness depends on rigorous scrutiny, adequate expertise and sustained executive compliance.

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