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Q4

Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · GS II · 10 marks · Parliament and State Legislatures

Parliament and State legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers and privileges and issues arising out of these.

Core demand of the question

- Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the **Estimates Committee**
- Link the general case for committees with the **Estimates Committee's** composition, functions and limits

Revision summary

Committees give Parliament time, expertise and cross-party scrutiny that the floor cannot.

DRSCs (1993) and the three financial committees cover Bills, **estimates**, accounts and PSUs.

The **Estimates Committee** has 30 Lok Sabha members, no minister, and studies economy and presentation of Budget **estimates**.

It does not audit spent money (PAC) or run public undertakings (COPU).

It becomes useful when reports precede grants and Action Taken Notes are published.

Flow diagram

Lok Sabha floor -> Committees

Committees -> Estimates Committee 30 LS

Committees -> PAC with CAG

Committees -> DRSCs 1993

Estimates Committee 30 LS -> Economy and form of estimates

Conclusion

- Give the **Estimates Committee** a small budget-analysis cell, and fix a calendar so reports on large demands appear before the related DRSC sitting.
- Require a published Action Taken Report within a set time, as PAC practice already expects, so **Estimates** work does not end as an unread volume.

Committees are useful because they supply time, papers and a less theatrical scrutiny that the floor cannot. The **Estimates Committee**, a thirty-member Lok Sabha body, examines whether Budget **estimates** are economical and well presented; it will matter more when its reports are

timed to the grant and answered in public, not only tabled.

Facts & figures

Estimates Committee

Thirty Lok Sabha members, elected annually, no minister; examines Budget estimates for economy, policy alternatives and form of presentation.

Public Accounts Committee

Examines CAG reports after expenditure; conventionally chaired by a member from the Opposition.

Committee on Public Undertakings

Examines reports and accounts of public undertakings; distinct from the Estimates Committee's general estimates work.

Departmentally Related Standing Committees (1993)

Subject committees of MPs that examine Demands for Grants, Bills and annual reports of ministries.

Article 151

CAG reports are laid in the legislature and feed the PAC; they are not the Estimates Committee's primary paper.

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