

1. PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PERFORM AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF MAINTAINING CONTINUOUS ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE. EXPLAIN. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT LIMIT THE FUNCTIONING OF THESE COMMITTEES?

Ans: Parliament appoints certain committees to exercise control on the activities of the executive as part of its functions. There are two kinds of committees in the Indian Parliament: standing and ad hoc. Ad hoc committees are usually appointed for a specific purpose and can be either select or joint. The standing committees- such as public account committees, estimate committee, committee on public undertakings - on the other hand are more permanent in nature,. In order to improve parliamentary oversight of the executive, a second type of standing committee known as the departmentally related standing committee (DRSC) was created in 1993.

They maintain continuous accountability as

- They provide an in-depth study of the issues under consideration in parliament which MPs may not do due to insufficient time at their disposal during sessions. For example – detailed scrutiny of demand of grants.
- They do unbiased scrutiny as it is devoid of any party bias which generally is a major hindrance in the working of parliament
- The Parliament passes budget once, it is these committees which facilitate control regarding economy and efficiency in public expenditure during the year like public accounts committee.
- Although, the committees play an important role in legislative purposes and reduce the burden of Parliament, yet there are certain limitations in the functioning of these committees:
- They should not consider matters of day-to-day administration
- There are sometimes overlapping functions being performed by two different committees
- Their recommendations are advisory in nature and not binding on the parliament
- Their investigation or scrutiny is, most of the times, postmortem, as they unearth the irregularities years after they have occurred.

Despite limitations, the parliamentary committees do provide an ongoing disciplinary oversight of government