

Assembly, six Cabinet ministers recommended by the Prime Minister. There are also ten Union Ministers as permanent invitees.

Mandate, Duties and Functioning of the ISC

The ISC is a recommendatory body with following duties:

- Investigating and discussing such subjects, in which some or all of the States or the Union and one or more States have a common interest, as may be brought before it.
- Making recommendations upon any such subject and in particular recommendations for the better coordination of policy and action with respect to that subject.
- Deliberating upon such other matters of general interest to the States as may be referred to by the Chairman to the Council.

The Council has a dedicated Secretariat to help in its functions. A Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council has been constituted for continuous consultation and processing of matters for the consideration of the Council. Currently, the Standing Committee comprises of Union Home Minister as Chairman and four Union Ministers of Cabinet rank and eight Chief Ministers of States as Members nominated by the Chairman of the Inter-State Council.

The Standing Committee would:

- have continuous consultation and process matters for consideration of the Council;
- process all matters pertaining to Centre-State relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council;
- monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council; and
- consider any other matter referred to it by the Chairman/Council.

The Standing Committee may also invite experts and persons eminent in specific fields to have the benefit of their views while deliberating upon the related subject.

The Council was slated to meet thrice a year given its important function in promoting cooperation, coordination and harmonization of policies. It also has a pivotal function of facilitating trust between the Centre and the States. However, the functioning of the Council has been far from satisfactory. The meetings of the Council have been quite infrequent. Given the need for strengthening, understanding and cooperation between Centre and States and also among States, the Council is an appropriate body that needs to be given importance.

9. *Although the Indian Constitution gives Rajya Sabha some special powers, yet on most matters the Lok Sabha exercises supreme power. Discuss.*

Approach:

- Briefly outline the structure of Parliament in the introduction.
- Discuss how Indian constitution gives some special powers to Rajya Sabha.
- Make a comparison of the powers of the Rajya Sabha with that of the Lok Sabha.
- Establish how the Lok Sabha exercises supreme power in most cases in the concluding part.

Answer:

The Indian Parliament consists of two houses - Lok Sabha, the Lower House and Rajya Sabha, the Upper House.

The Rajya Sabha is an indirectly elected body and represents the states of India. Due to its federal character, it has been given two exclusive or special powers that are not enjoyed by the Lok Sabha:

- It can authorise the Parliament to make a law on a subject enumerated in the State List (Article 249).
- It can authorise the Parliament to create new All-India Services common to both the Centre and states (Article 312).