

UNIT – III UNION GOVERNMENT

3.4 Powers and Functions of the Council of Ministers

The functions of the Council of Ministers has two major aspects: Policy-making and Implementation.

1. Policy-making: The Council of Ministers are always the most experienced, the most influential and the most trusted members of the ruling party. As deciding policy matters is a very crucial responsibility, it comes under the Powers of Council of Ministers of India. They decide and frame policies regarding each and every branch of the Government in their meetings. Within the Cabinet room they have every right to differ on policy matters. But once a decision is made, they are expected to speak in one voice. They cannot criticise such a policy in public. That is why this aspect is known as the collective responsibility of the Cabinet.
2. Implementation: Once a policy decision is taken on any subject, it is conveyed to the Minister of State and the Deputy Minister of the concerned Ministry. They chalk out its broad details and hand them over to the civil servants related to that Ministry to translate them into practice. In this way, the business of the Government is managed jointly by the Council of Ministers with the help of the civil servants concerned.

Following are some of the Powers of Council of Ministers of India

1. All the departments of the Government are under the control of the Ministers and it is their responsibility to run the administration in a good manner.
2. It is the function of the Council of ministers to maintain order and peace in the state.
3. They introduce Bills, participate in the discussion and cast their vote.
4. The budget of the states is prepared by the Council of Ministers.
5. They review the work of planning and the Planning Commission.
6. Managing the foreign tours of the President and other ministers also comes under the functions of the Council of Ministers

The role Council of Ministers can be enumerated as under:

- Formulation, execution, evaluation and revision of public policy in various spheres which the party in power seeks to progress and practice.
- Coordination among various ministries and other organs of the government which might indulge in conflicts, wastefulness, duplication of functions and empire building.
- Preparation and monitoring of the legislative agenda which translated the policies of the government in action through statutory enactments.
- Executive control over administration through appointments, rulemaking powers and handling of crises and disasters – natural as well as political.
- Financial management through fiscal control and operation of funds like Consolidated Fund and Contingency Funds of India.