

## **MEMBERS' REFERENCE SERVICE**

The Members' Reference service organizes the dissemination of factual, objective and latest information to the members of Parliament within the time stipulated by them. The subjects on which information is provided are usually varied and have a wide compass covering both their national and international dimensions. The subjects usually cover issues taken up for discussion/deliberation in the Parliament through the parliamentary device of Questions and/or through legislative measures like Government Bills or Private Member's Bills and Resolutions. The information requirement of a Member is in keeping with his/her multiple functional role as a legislator, viz. as a Member of a Parliamentary Committee or of a Parliamentary Delegation visiting abroad or as a delegate to any International Parliamentary Conference/Seminar, etc. Apart from the Session period, the Service caters to information needs of Members during inter-Session period as well.

### **i). Organisation**

In order to ensure supply of the latest and most authentic information to Members within the stipulated time, the Members' Reference Service is presently divided into various subject desks viz. the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs; Rural Development, Labour, Employment; Economic & Financial Affairs; Industry and Investment; Legal and Constitutional Affairs; Political and Parliamentary Affairs; Social Affairs; Social Welfare; Infrastructure & Energy; Human Resource Development; International Affairs and Defence; and Science, Technology and Communications . The officer in charge of each Desk collects and collates information pertaining to the subjects allocated to him/her and make available the same to the members in the form of Reference Notes, Background Notes, Information Bulletins, Fact Sheets, Bibliographical series, Compilations, Statistical statements, etc. The work of the Service is planned in such a way as to ensure timely disposal of the Members' reference requests.

### **ii). Facilities**

The facilities provided by the Members' Reference Service fall broadly under the following categories:

- Supply of on-the-spot information to members from published documents;
- Collection and dissemination of latest information, factual data, statistics, etc. in response to members' written reference requisitions;
- Preparation of Reference Notes on important topics;
- Preparation of bibliographies on important subjects;
- Preparation of Background Notes, Information Bulletins, Fact Sheets and Information Folders on topical issues;
- Maintenance of Study Boxes on topical issues in anticipation of the information needs of the members; and
- Updating and printing of various regular publications from time to time.

### iii). Processing of Requests

The scope of material to be collected in response to Members' reference requisitions is normally limited to subjects connected with the immediate business before the two Houses of Parliament. Members may hand over the written requisitions either at the Members' Assistance Desk located in the Parliament House or the one located inside the Members' Reading Room in Parliament Library Building, indicating clearly and precisely the specific points on which information is desired by them. They also have the option to convey their requirements over telephone or direct to the officers in the Reference Division. One officer is available at each of the Members' Assistance Desks to attend to the on-the-spot information requirements of Members and to assist them in filling up the reference requisitions.

The Members' Reference Service caters to the information needs of Members both in English and Hindi as per their choice. The information required by the Members is culled out from authentic sources, arranged and edited in the form of notes or tables, as the case may be, and passed on to the Members concerned.

### iv). Analysis of the work handled

- a) The popularity and usefulness of Members' Reference Service can be gauged from the marked increase in the number of reference requisitions received and handled during the past few years. As against 150 references handled in 1950, 425 references were attended to in 1960, 700 in 1970, 3627 in 1980, 5167 in 1990, 6508 in 2000, 6681 in 2010, 4900 in 2012, 5596 in 2015 and **5291** in 2016.
- b) A **Session-wise resume of work done** by the Service reveals that on an average, 44 references were received and handled per day during the session periods of the Eleventh Lok Sabha, 53 references during the Twelfth, 57 references during the Thirteenth and 67 references during Fourteenth Lok Sabha. As against this, as many as 55 references on an average were received and handled per day during the Fifteenth Lok Sabha.
- c) A **time and motion analysis** of references received during the Fourteenth Lok Sabha reveals that as many as 73 per cent of the references were for the same day, 24 per cent were required within 2-3 days, 2 per cent within 4-7 days and only 1 per cent were for more than seven days. So far as the Fifteenth Lok Sabha is concerned, an analysis of data shows that, on an average 81 per cent of references were to be disposed of on the same day, 17 per cent were required within 2-3 days, 2 per cent within 4-7 days and only 1 per cent were for more than seven days.
- d) An **analysis of subject-wise classification** of references received during the Fifteenth Lok Sabha reveals that 45 per cent of the total references were on economic and financial matters, closely followed by 42 per cent on political and social issues. The remaining 13 per cent consisted of references on subjects like Legal, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs (7 per cent), Science and Technology, Defence and International Affairs (3 per cent each).

## **v). Publications**

The following publications of reference value are also compiled, updated and revised from time to time:

- President's Rule in the States and Union Territories
- Council of Ministers since 1947;
- Parliament of India: A Study [brought out at the end of the term of each Lok Sabha];
- Presidential Ordinances since 1950;
- India: Some Facts
- Time spent on various kinds of Business in Lok Sabha

## **vi). Online Reference Service through Members' e-portal**

As an initiative towards e-Parliament and Paperless Secretariat, a Members' e-Portal for the benefit of Members has been launched on 17 July 2016. In addition to the signed requisitions, Members can send their queries online through Members' e-portal and get the desired information through e-resources in the inbox of e-portal.

About 350 references have been received online from Members till 07.09.2017.

A large number of occasional papers are now made available on Library website and on Intranet in digital format for on-line retrieval by Members of Parliament and for use in the Secretariat. The electronic versions of the Reference Notes are also e-mailed to Members of both the Houses of Parliament.

## **vii). Reference Desks**

In addition, the Reference Division, in close association with the Parliament Library, sets up a Reference Desk during Parliamentary Conferences and Seminars to meet the information requirements of the Delegates. Selected Parliamentary publications and reference books, yearbooks, etc. are usually kept on display during such Conferences.