

**Feed back on the training on
Professional Development Attachment
at House of Commons, London
from 13th - 24th June, 2011**

I attended the Professional Development Attachment at House of Commons, London from 13th - 24th June, 2011. I want to mention that the Training Programme at the House of Commons was very educative and informative. I enjoyed a lot by interacting with the officers of the House of Commons and the officers who were with me from other legislative bodies. I want to thank Secretary General and all the officers of Training Cell (Shri Charyulu ji, Shri Ravinder Kumar, Shri Narmadeshwer Prasad, Smt. Oindrila Roy and others) for nominating me for the above mentioned programme and

extending all the guidance and cooperation for the visit. I also thank the staff of the Indian High Commission who gave their valuable guidance to me during my stay in London.

This Course was organized by the overseas office of the House of Commons, UK and there were four participants namely Mr. Andrew Simons, Addl. Secretary, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, Mr. Kavakuru Tjikuzu, Senior Parliamentary Clerk, National Assembly, Namibia, Ms. Dorothea Fransman, Senior Parliamentary Clerk, National Council, Namibia and myself. During the Course a host of subjects were discussed and the views were exchanged with each other. During the discussion following points emerged:-

1. In the Committee system of the UK, public can view the proceedings of the committee whereas in our case Committee proceedings are not open to public.

2. Generally there are eleven members in the committee and the quorum for committee proceedings is three including the Chairman but in our case the membership may differ for different types of committees and the quorum is higher in our case. It may range from 33% to 50%.

3. The Chairmen of the Committees related to Govt. Departments, the Environmental Audit Committee, the Select Committee on Public Administration, the Committee on Public Accounts and the Select Committee on

Procedure, are elected by the House by secret ballot.

4. There is discretionary power for the Speaker to propose that member who has attended less than 60 % formal meetings can be replaced in the committee.

5. There is a Scrutiny Unit constituted in 2002 which consist of specialists with particular expertise in expenditure, social policy and performance measurement which examines the bills before introduction to the House of Commons, but there is no such provision in our committees.

6. In the Parliamentary committee system there are specialist adviser appointed by the Committee who are not permanent members of staff but outside specialists paid by the day.

7. The system also contains the committee specialists appointed by the House who are employed from the national audit service, the civil service or local government to provide the analysis and briefing on the committee subject.

8. The permission to visit the foreign countries by the committee to transact their business is accorded by the Chairman of the Liaison Committee consisting of the Chairmen of all the select committees, constituted for this purpose. In our case permission for the domestic and international visits is accorded by the presiding officer of the respective houses. The Liaison Committee has also power to call Prime Minister for oral evidence at least twice a year.

9. In the Namibian Parliament the Standing Committees are appointed for the whole term of the Parliament. The ad-hoc Committees or Select Committees are dissolved after doing their assigned work.

10. There are 650 MPs in House of Commons and 828 MPs in House of Lords for 62 million people (one MP for 42000 population) whereas in our case there are 790 members of Parliament for 1210 million population (one MP for 15.32 lakhs population).

11. It is very interesting point that House of Lords is bigger (828) than the House of Commons whereas in our case Lok Sabha is bigger than Rajya Sabha.

12. House of Lords members are nominated by the queen on the advice of Prime Minister. Some members are hereditary peers (92) and others are life peers. The members are classified as lord spiritual and lord temporal. In our case upper house is an elected body and only 12 members are nominated by President of India. In the Namibian Upper House i.e. National Council 26 Members are elected from the 13 regions.

13. The membership of House of Lords indicates the unitary nature of the house. The Lords members do not represent Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. In Rajya Sabha, except 12 nominated members remaining members represent the different states and UTs indicating the composition of House as

federal. The composition of the National Council of Namibia also indicates the federal nature.

14. The Speaker of Lord i.e. the Lord Speaker is elected among the members of Lords and cannot hold office beyond two terms of five years each. In the Rajya Sabha Chairman is elected by the Members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and there is no specific restriction for seeking the re-elections. The Chairman, Rajya Sabha unlike the Lord Speaker is not member of Parliament. In the Namibian Council the Chairman is elected among the 26 members of the Council.

15. The Lord Member cannot become the Prime Minister in UK. The Douglas Home

was the last man who became the Prime Minister from the House of Lords in 1963-64.

The minimum age for membership of House of Lords and House of Commons is 21 years and 18 years respectively. In our Parliament the minimum age for upper house and lower house is 30 and 25 years respectively.

16. House of Lords members do not get salary but they are paid daily allowance at the rate of approximately 300 pounds per day throughout the month whereas House of the Common members get the regular salary and DA is not paid to them.

17. There is no provision of Joint sitting neither in the case of opening of the Budget Session nor during the dead lock over the amendment of any bill. The monarch during

the starting of the Budget Session and after each general election addresses the House of Lords only and this is called the state opening of the Parliament. The House of Commons members are not allowed to enter in the House of Lords.

18. Under the articles 249, 312, 352, 356 and 360 of the Indian Constitution the Upper House has been given the special powers to make certain laws/approval whereas the such provision is not applicable in the case of House of Lords.

19. The members of House of Lords cannot cast their votes in the parliamentary elections. The monarch can vote in the general elections but it is considered to be unconstitutional for the monarch to cast his/her vote as he/she has

to show the non-association with any political party.

20. Opposition parties get extra money to carryout their parliament business, this money is called **short money**. There is no provision for Indian opposition parties.

21. There are **opposition days** allowing the opposition parties in the House of Commons to determine the topic for debate rather than the government. There are usually about 20 opposition days in a Parliamentary Session, with the official opposition party being allocated 17 days.

22. There is a **parliamentary outreach system** in the House of Commons which envisages to teach and educate the common people of UK. In our country BPST Lok

Sabha conducts the educating programme for MPs and officers of the State and Central Government but generally common people are not invited for imparting the training.

23. The Marshal of the House of Commons is called the Sergeant at arms who moves with mace which is a royal symbol. The Marshal of the Upper House of UK is called the Black Rod.

Questions are of different types like starred, unstarred, urgent question, engagement question and topical questions.

24. Topical oral questions occupy the last 15 minutes of the question time and for this no formal notice is given and capital ‘T’ is mentioned on the format.

25. Engagement questions are raised to hear the reply from the Prime Minister and for this also, no formal notice is required.

26. For the oral question three clear days notice is required i.e. if the question is tabled down on Monday the answer day comes on Thursday.

27. In case of written question, two clear days are required i.e. if the question is tabled down on Wednesday the answer is given on Monday.

28. The draft question list is prepared in blue colour paper that is called blue book and the final list of question is known as whites.

29. The House of Commons may refuse the reply of the question if the expenditure for

processing the reply on the said question exceeds the 800 pounds.

30. The oral question list contains the 25 starred questions and 10 topical questions. In our case starred list contains only 20 questions.

31. On every Wednesday in the House of Commons from 12 noon to 12.30 p.m. there is Prime Minister's question time where members may raise the question on topical issues. The Leader of the opposition can raise **six supplementary** questions.

32. The reply of the unstarred questions can be furnished during the recess period also. In our case the reply is given only during the session period.

33. There is procedure of urgent questions which take place after the question hour. The urgent questions can be asked even on Friday at 11.00 O' clock. The oral questions can be asked from Monday to Thursday. On Friday oral questions can not be asked. The urgent questions some time looks like special mention of Rajya Sabha.

34. On a particular date Member can ask two oral questions (one for each department and five written questions). There is no limit of written questions if there is no specific date for reply. In our question system a member can ask one starred questions and four unstarred questions on a particular date. The unstarred questions can not be asked without mentioning the date.

I while concluding my experience once again thank the Secretary General for his generous task of nominating me for the said programme and other concerned for help and guidance.

(T.N. PANDEY)
Joint Director

