

**FEEDBACK ON TRAINING PROGRAMME
AT RIPA INTERNATIONAL, LONDON
(FROM 30TH OCTOBER TO 11TH NOVEMBER, 2011)**

I was nominated to attend a customized Training Programme on *Parliamentary Administration: Benchmarking against British Parliament* at RIPA International, London from the 31st October to 11th November, 2011. It was specially designed for the participants to understand the procedures and practices followed in the British Parliament. There were in total ten participants out of whom six were from India, two from South Africa and one each from Timor Leste and Nigeria. During the training, I took an active participation in the debates and discussions, which gave me a tremendous opportunity to acquaint myself with the different practices and procedures followed by the British Parliamentary system.

In the introductory session, Mr. Ian Church, the course Director at RIPA International, gave the participants a warm welcome and introduced the training course which *inter alia* included:

The administrative structure of the Westminster Parliament in the 21st century (the evolution of parliamentary democracy in Britain, system of representation, procedure of legislation, deliberation in the Houses, the power of executive, party discipline and the role of opposition, etc.); the House of Lords and its changing constitutional position; the role of the Lord Speaker and Speaker in the House of Lords and House of Commons, respectively; implementing changes in the organizational setup including *New Parliament Strategy 2010-2015*; governments interface with Parliament and civil procedure code; an overview of the public service in the UK; the aims and objectives of human resource administration in the House of Lords; the process of recruitment in *Hansard* including person specification and test

procedure; the party system and its evolution from Wilson to Cameron; the system of internal audit; Information services in the House of Commons; the functioning of Select Committee system; etc. Besides, guided visits were organized to both the Houses of Parliament; Select Committee; Supreme Court; Vote Office - printing and distribution of parliamentary papers; office of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; and to the Chamber of the House of Commons to witness the proceedings of the House.

Since the programme was based on the working of the British Parliament, the trainers/experts were mostly invited from both the Houses of Parliament. The course was primarily focused on the practical aspects rather than its legal and political principles, in order to detail the participants about the working of the British parliament in a systematic manner. The course was also aimed to provide basic information as to how officials and procedural experts keep pace with the increasing demands and changes that typically affect many Parliaments. The training course provided a unique opportunity to make a comparative study of the structural and functional aspects of the British Parliament *vis-à-vis* Parliament of India.

During the visits to the various august institutions, the participants were given an opportunity to see the historic structures of the Westminster building, its corridors and chambers and experience its ambience. We witnessed the proceedings of the House of Commons during our visit to the Westminster which helped us to know about the similarities and differences between British and Indian system. We had an opportunity to visit the main committee room where the Select Committee conducts its meetings. We were also briefed about the seating arrangements for members, officers, witnesses and public. Besides, we were taken to Supreme Court and Office

of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which was a wonderful experience in itself.

Since it was my first overseas visit for a training programme, I was told to follow certain norms/precautions during my travelling, staying and training programme at London. I attended and actively participated in all the courses of the training programme organized at the Institute. Also I got an opportunity to discuss with the Head of Procurement of House of Lords about their system of procurement. Besides, I maintained cordial relationships with my colleagues and other participants and helped in building team spirit.

My visit to RIPA International has given me ample opportunities for all-round development, particularly in the field of global changes. I, as an individual got enough invaluable experience. I am extremely grateful and thankful to the Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha and the Training Cell for nominating me for the programme. From the experience gained, I am of the view that officials of the Secretariat should be exposed to such type of training programmes also in future.

J.K. MALLICK
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TRAINING CELL