

First of all, we would like to thank the Secretary- General, Rajya Sabha for sending us on a Study Tour of British Parliament and European Parliament. This was a great learning experience for all of us.

Next, as a group leader, I would like to extend my heartiest thanks to all of my team members for being very cooperative and also very attentive. We attended all the lectures for full duration and without any duress. Whatever marketing and sight-seeing we did, we did it in whatever time was left to us after the lectures.

Now, we would like to make a few general remarks about the city of London.

- (i) It is a multicultural city in the real sense of the word. People seem to be making friends across all the cultures, races and classes.
- (ii) We could see no child beggar there and adult beggars were also few and far between. So, happily the David Copperfield and the Oliver Twists are not there any more.
- (iii) London still retains that beautiful tradition of City musician.
- (iv) London has few cars on the roads and practically no motorcycles. Any one having a car on the roads of London has to pay at least 10 pounds per day as congestion charge/fee for driving a vehicle within the Congestion Charging Zone in Central London to the Authorities.
- (v) They have cleansed and rejuvenated their river Thames to the extent that is unbelievable and it is no more the river whose stench and stink once went up to Parliament House of Britain. It is now a tourist destination.
- (vi) Bicycles were always on the roads for the use of anyone who liked it.
- (vii) Evening newspapers were available for free on the bus stands and on the metro stations,. Any one would pick them and read one as long as one liked and they will leave them on other such public places to be read by others.

(viii) Again, there was no visible pollution in London, and the skies were not black like in days of William Blake (He rued much the smoking chimneys of London).

(ix) Nevertheless, the dark effect of a very long spell of pollution is still visible in London and its mornings and evenings are still without the songs of birds.

EVOLUTION OF BRITISH PARLIAMENT

British Parliament evolved slowly. Earlier in the king council only clergy and nobility were represented. But later as agrarian economy and nascent trade capitalism developed, every shire that is a great county started sending two knights and every borough that is a township started sending 2 burgesses. The king had to opt for their induction as he had to have a larger sanction for the increase in taxation. For the first time in 1341 A.D. the knights and burgesses tried to have a say not only in imposition of taxes but also in the expenditure of the same. This angered the king very much and as a result they met separately. After that the king started to avoid the Parliament and so in 1376 A.D. the Commons convened a parliament which is still cherished by the people by name 'GOOD PARLIAMENT'. For the first time they chose a spokesman named Peter De la mare. He went to the king with demands of the Commons but was thrown into prison by the Prince. Thus the Commons realized the importance of the speaker and one voice so when he was released he was made the 2nd speaker of the House of Commons. The first one was elected in the 1258 A.D. when Peter de Monbiot presided over the Parliament held in Oxford.

Hence if continuous history is to be traced the first speaker was Peter de la mare. Some sort of inherent adherence to the twin basic principles of democracy (i) no taxation without representation and (ii) institutional transcendentalism seem to be there in British Parliament right from beginning. Even the kings could impose taxes without taking the Parliament in confidence.

This was evident once again during civil wars. Five MPs of House of Commons were vehement critics of the King. So King Charles the First stormed inside the House and demanded that the Speaker must hand over the five erring members to him. The Speaker did not have the permission of the House of Commons to do so. Hence in very glowing words he said: "May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here." This was declaration of the fact that though outside the House, King is Sovereign but in matters related to the House it is the House that is sovereign. This is

what we mean by Institutional transcendentalism).The British are very proud of this incident and they think that this event is central to their evolution as a Parliamentary democracy.

UNIQUE FACTS ABOUT BRITISH PARLIAMENT

(i) Though Britain has no written Constitution, one book by Erskine May and other by Bagehot is regarded as the *de facto* Constitution.

(ii) The sovereignty of British Parliament is now not the same as it used to be when it was said that British Parliament can do anything it likes under the sun. (Recall the proverb: 'Sun never sets on British Empire' and V.K. Krishna Menon's repartee that this was so because God could not trust them in dark.) Now UK has a new method of referendum as well as a separate Supreme Court. The Lecturer also said that the court has threatened that if Parliament enacts a law against the UN or universal human rights, they may scrutinize it.

(iii) Their messengers have Greek God Mercury on their medallion and they have a committee room named after Moses. Thus they are true to the both stream of their culture, Hebraic as well as Hellenic. Moreover, only messengers can go in other House.

(iv) All work of specific nature is done by the Committees.

(v) The Press is also allowed the lobby pass to get the story behind the scene.

(vi) There is two swords length distance between the treasury and opposition benches. This is due to the fact that in medieval times very often MPs were wont to take their swords out.

(vii) Both the Houses have their own libraries. There is no fixed sitting arrangement for any MP.

(viii) In Central Lobby of British Parliament, anyone can go and meet any M.P he likes by sending a message to him.

(ix) The sitting capacity of both the Houses is lesser than the total number of the MPs of the respective Houses. When, after the Second World War, there was a move to construct the new House of Commons building, there was a suggestion to make it large enough for all the MPs, but Winston Churchill

opposed this by saying that all the members would never be in the House and it would be a nasty sight to see an almost empty House. So the *status quo ante* was re-established.

(x) Sitting timings of both the Houses differ from each other on any particular day. The timings also vary from day to day.

(xi) On an average the House of Commons sits for 150 days and House of Lords for 140 days in a year.

(xii) Recently, they have constituted a separate Supreme Court and all the Law Lords have been made judges and they do not sit in the House of Lords any more. Though it was supposed that this Supreme Court will only be giving verdict over the cases as per Law, but, recently, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, that is their Chief Justice designate, threatened the Parliament that if it passes the laws against the universal human laws; the Supreme Court may turn itself into a constitutional court as well. Hence, the omnipotence of the British Parliament is on the wane. Speakers of both the houses are all powerful in all administrative and functional matters of the houses.

(xiii) In House of Lords, government has little control regarding their business. There is an Appointment Commission for the appointment of the Staff.

(xiv) Speaker is supreme in House of Commons, but it is desirable that he takes the sense or consensus of the House into account.

(xv) In House of Lords, there is no fixed number of members and there are certain Life Peers also who will continue to be members as long as they live. In House of Lords, they have a new category called Cross Benchers. They are the Lords who, after their appointment, were asked about their affiliation, and opted for none of the parties.

(xvi) In House of Lords also, a member can sit anywhere he or she likes. In fact, the day we went to House of Lords, a lady member was sitting in the enclosure within which the Queen sits.

(xvii) One thing that our Parliament may also adopt is that, in British Parliament, for any discussion, the time is allotted to the MPs, not the parties. Not only this, there are many other instruments in House of Lords as well as

in the House of Commons to give opportunity of expression and speech to the back benchers.

(xviii) Ever since the civil war, no monarch has entered the House of Commons.

(xix) In any of the House, no member can speak in any language other than English, hence languages like Welsh, Glaswegian or Scottish are banned in both Houses. It may be one of the reasons that some people of some parts of the UK are seeking independence. Because, in this era of globalized monoculture, language helps people retain their identity.

(xx) Again, there is no limit to the number of the written questions a member can ask.

(xxi) Pro-Backbencher feature of these Houses is that they have, on some fixed day, the whole hour for a single Ministry.

(xxii) Word Limit allowed for a particular question is 250.

(xxiii) There is a provision called Every-Day-Motion. For this, no formal permission is needed by the Member.

(xxiv) There is an adjournment debate in Houses in the last half-an-hour in which mostly the Back Benchers are given time and the Minister concerned listens, though the House remains empty.

(xxv) In both the Houses, there is no quorum. Only three persons are needed to run the business i.e. the Hon'ble Chairperson, one speaker and one from the treasury benches.

(xxvi) There is no obituary nor the House is adjourned even if a sitting Member dies.

(xxvii) Though, the Select Committee recommendations are optional, the Public Bills Committee recommendations are binding.

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION AND POLITICS

The British Constitution is unwritten and hence extremely flexible. It also envisages the division of power. In fact, this process started with Magna Carta in 1215. Democracy in the real sense of the words started in 1688. This flexibility has also enabled to have a situation that whenever the European and British laws collide, the European laws get supremacy.

- (i) This flexibility has also enabled them to have different kind of electoral structure at different levels. For example, they have proportional system of representation in Scotland and First past post system for Parliament. There are some elections particularly for the assemblies like Welsh Assembly, in which voters have two votes, one for the candidate and other for the party.
- (ii) In fact, they said that the flexibility of their unwritten constitution and the separation of powers of executive, judiciary and legislative has given them great advantage. They cited the example of USA, and said that they are unable to stop the gun culture in their nation because right to keep arms is their constitutional right and amending this has not been possible despite all political will as it is too difficult. While had it been so in Britain, they could have abolished this right without battling an eyelid.
- (iii) It is also admitted that it is the separation of power that has saved Britain from the recurrent revolution in 19th century.
- (iv) There has always been a debate as to whether the MPs are delegates or the representatives. The British seem to be having both the systems in place. In normal cases, they act like representatives, as great politician and philosopher Edmund Burke wished, but whenever some epoch-making decisions are to be taken, the M.Ps. are reduced to the status of the delegates and a referendum is held.
- (v) Their evolution as a democracy has been quite tardy and till 1948 the people in business and university had two votes.
- (vi) They have an Early Day Motion from the private members which is just read out and not debated.

(viii) In order to increase the number of women in Parliament, they have hit upon quite a novel way. They often field women candidates from the so-called marginal constituencies and also they nominate women MPs. on the seats of the retiring MPs. This way they have been able to increase the number of women MPs. And this has had a very sanitizing effect on the working of Parliament as now the whole night debates are almost a thing of the past as such things are not good for a wholesome family life.

(viii) One more trend is observed that now more and more Members are the full-time politicians.

(ix) There, Back-Bencher is a nomenclature in which any Member who has no formal position is a Back Bencher.

(x) British politics is party based politics and presently, not even a single Member is an independent Member.

(xi) One more very loving rather comely feature of British Parliamentary System is that the candidates are chosen by the Constituency Party and once a party chooses a candidate, there is nothing that the national party can do. It means, the candidates are not selected by the high commands of the national parties.

(xii) In every session 17 days are given to Opposition, and they decide and define the agenda.

(xiii) Having seen them so innovative, in India also, we can merge the three constituencies and have one member through first past post method, the second through the proportional representation and the third a woman MP through whatever system we may decide. This way number of MPs will remain the same and women will also be represented and also almost all the parties too will get representation which fail to get sometimes even a single seat despite a lot of votes. In this connection, it is worth noting that in 1951, Winston Churchill got more seats but Labour party got more votes.

(xiv) Their Select Committees can call the Ministers and grill them. Their Joint Committees can call the Prime Minister and grill him.

(xv) They can convene the Parliament at a three days' notice.

(xvi)The House of Lords MPs have only allowances and House of Common MPs have salary as well as allowances.

(xvii)In House of Lords, there are 20 MPs who are unaffiliated and are also called Cross Benchers.

(xviii)There, Bills are referred to the Committees before the introduction and also after the introduction.

(xix)In the House of Lords, there is no time limit for the Member's speech.

(xx)There are many benchmarks for good Parliamentary behaviour on Commonwealth Parliamentary Association website.

‘In everyday life, it is quite healthy attitude to assess yourself. It is most gratifying to see how you perform against targets or benchmarks that you have set for yourself as a standard that you wish to achieve in order to elevate your performance to that level. You are not trying to compare to yourself to anyone else; but you set your own standards that you think will elevate your level and set yourself to get those standards. There is nothing more satisfying than to feel that you have achieved an acceptably high performance mark’

- Honorary Taomati Luta, MP, Speaker, Kiribati

(xxi) Many of the Lecturers were against the outsourcing and economy drives undertaken by some Parliaments. They said that they know the cost of every thing and value of nothing.

(xxii) There is no Central Election Commission in Britain and election is held by 650 regional councils.

(xxiii) He also suggested that there should be something like official electronic network of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State Assemblies so that there is regular interaction between them and they could learn from the better practices of one another.

(xxiv) He also suggested a similar network between the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and other Parliamentary democracies of the Commonwealth.

PRINTING

- (i) They have a no fail agreement with the company to which they have outsourced their Printing work.
- (ii) Most of their materials are online and they can print on demand and hence they do not need big warehouses now.
- (iii) The budget is leaked intentionally and it is also amended if some provisions of the budget are highly opposed.
- (iv) All the Government publications are available freely online while their printed versions are very costly.
- (v) But despite all this, there are problems and Members are aghast at the spectacle that there are only net versions of the political debates of the House on bills also. This is due to a well known fact that in software technology, there is no format which cannot be tinkered with. So, all this outsourcing and net dependence is not liked by Members and they are opposing these plans at whatever forum is available to them.

In Westminster Parliament, the Parliamentary Papers and Publications printing job is awarded to the private printers for ten years. It is done after inspecting the unit and set-up of the Press by printing experts who have thorough knowledge of printing processes. The CRC of every publication is e-mailed to the Press for final printing.

Similarly, to benefit from the advancement of printing technology, the following procedures and measures can be taken in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat for printing of the publications:

- (i) The IT Section, with assistance of Printing Section, can recruit the DTP Operators as their work will require the involvement and guidance of the IT experts
- (ii) The CRC of every publication will be prepared by the Operators. It will save time and labour involved in getting proofs from the Press for checking

and correction. The cover of publications will also be designed in the Secretariat itself by the DTP Operators with the help of software for it.

(iii) The Bulletins, List of Business, Papers Laid on the Table, Bills, Synopsis and other Parliamentary Papers' CRC can be e-mailed directly to the Press. The Press will download the CRC for processing and the hard copy will not be required. For delivering the hard copy, the involvement of Printing and D-Branch will cease. It will save both time and money.

(iv) LAARDIS is the main publication unit of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The preparation of CRC by the Secretariat will save time involved in getting proofs from Press. hence the quality of printed books and other publications will improve.

Similarly, backlog of Debates and Committee Reports' will be cleared by adopting the above mentioned procedure. The publications will be printed error-free. The checking of proofs will be done thoroughly before making CRC for the Press by the author and Printing Sections of the Secretariat.

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REPORTING

Earlier, the reporting was not done officially. And, to begin with, great persons like Charles Dickens, the beloved novelist and Samuel Johnson, the first man to make an English dictionary, were parliamentary reporters. The official reporting and printing started with Thomas Hansard and they still call the reporting service as Hansard Service. This reporting service is independent and no Member can get any report changed. Nevertheless the Hansards are free to improve upon the language of the Members.

(i) The reporters are very respected as they work in the House. Mr. Ian Church, our Course Director, narrated two incidents which illustrate this amply. Once, there was a new Member in the House of Commons. He suddenly stood up and started speaking. Mr. Ian Church was sitting with a reporter who was himself new to the Hansard Service. So, he did not recognize the Member and exclaimed, “who the hell he is!”. Incidentally, the mouthpiece and earphone both were on and the Prime Minister listened to this conversation and stood up and looked up to the reporter and announced the name of the speaker. Again, once Mr. Ian Church was himself looking down, in order to see the face of a speaker, and the cover of his pen fell down on the head of a Minister. He also looked up and said, 'I will send it up.' And he called the chamber attendant and sent that pen cover up.

(ii) One very innovative thing has been done by Hansard Service there. They have been finding it very difficult to recruit new reporters. Moreover shorthand which they call Pittman art is no more taught in that nation. So, they have opened an in-house training institute. This institute also gives a diploma certificate to its students. Similar training programmes should be started in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat for Reporters, Interpreters and Printing and Translation personnel as they are also services of specific nature and they are also finding it very difficult to recruit suitable persons to these posts.

In the afternoon of 14th October, 2014, Mr. Jonathan Hoare made a PowerPoint Presentation on ‘Reporting the proceedings – recruitment and training at the Official Report (Hansard). He informed us about the Official

Report of the proceedings of the Houses of UK Parliament, which is called “Hansard”. It is the record of what actually transpires in the Parliament, like answers of Parliament Questions, debates, procedures, Statements by Ministers, etc. Dwelling on the history of Parliamentary reporting, he informed that Hansard was selective and mostly compiled from press reports with only selective speeches being reported. It tried to be as accurate and impartial as possible and even refused Members who wanted to make unjustifiable changes. Later on, in 1878, Treasury Grant enabled Hansard to employ four reporters to produce fuller reports. In 1907, a Select Committee was formed to look into the need for creation of authentic report. This Select Committee gave birth to the Official Report which it said shall be:

“a full report, in the first person, of all speakers alike, a full report being defined as one “which, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument.”

We were also told that in the year 1943, Hansard name was reinstated on the front cover. Then, changes in format were made. The computerized production of report brought in financial savings and service improvements.

It was informed that Hansard is made available on internet for publication, free of charge, three hours after a speech is made in Parliament. The Hansard Reporters report the speeches of Members and then edit it to remove repetitions and obvious mistakes but without changing the meaning.

Then, on what skills a Parliamentary Reporter should possess, he said that the Reporter should be able to report the proceedings according to the context, understand and apply Parliamentary context, understand and apply in-House style and use relevant documents to support the understanding of debates. He further said that the editing rule is, nothing that adds to the meaning of what has been said must be lost in editing, and redundancies, repetitions and clumsy phrasing and obvious mistakes are usually edited out or corrected.

Explaining the evolution of Hansard Reporter training, he informed us that the 'Audio Only Reporter Training is being given to Reporters since 1997 as there is dearth of high-speed Shorthand writers worldwide. He also informed that the UK Parliament also tried to open some Pittman's Shorthand Schools and Stenographer Schools in order to get some Shorthand writers, but it did not succeed. He also used one term "Sitting with Nellie", which means the new reporters are made to sit with their senior experienced colleagues who train them in their jobs. On an average, four-five Audio only Reporters are recruited to the House of Commons every year.

Recently, the House of Commons have introduced Hansard Reporter Training Course at the time of induction of Audio only Reporters. The first Accredited Hansard Reporter Training Course was introduced in June, 2010 and the first batch of four Hansard Committee Reporters was recruited in 2012.

We were also told about the recruitment of Hansard Reporters. They have laid down personal specifications, which include that the person concerned should have wide general knowledge and the ability to understand a complex argument and report it clearly and grammatically; ability to check references, quotations and other details reliably; demonstrable team working skills and the ability to work quickly and flexibly under pressure; and good basic keyboard skills and familiarity with Window-based software. Then, they also take a written test and transcription test of a five-minute speech which is required to be transcribed in 75 minutes. Then, it is followed by an interview.

The selected candidates are then sent for full-time Post-Graduate Diploma Module 1 of 12 weeks. They are given training on Parliamentary Reporting (Theory) in the training room, but are taken out on frequent visits to live events. They are also given group instructions and individual coaching. They are asked to practice transcriptions from recordings. They are also asked to shadow a Reporter to the meetings, and the Hansard experts make presentations before them.

Among the key learning outcomes; the trainees are able to follow complex, technical arguments made in Parliament, understand Parliamentary processes, understand the need for accuracy and impartiality in Parliamentary reporting, etc. The trainees are then assessed for their performance in Module 1. Then, the trainees are sent for Post-Graduate Diploma Module 2, which is

also of 12 weeks. After completion of their Module 1 and Module 2 training, they are finally appointed as Committee Reporters.

A positive idea which can be implemented in Rajya Sabha Secretariat:

Presently, high speed writing is a dying art around the world. In India too, Shorthand Training Schools have closed down to give birth to computer training. Hence, there is non-availability of Reporters even after repeated efforts to recruit suitable candidates. As the British Parliament is appointing Audio only Reporters, who are given in-house training by them, on the same lines, in order to overcome shortage of Reporters in our Secretariat, our Recruitment Section could think on the following options:

- (i) Hold a Departmental Examination for eligible Stenographers and PAs working in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat;
- (ii) Hold one test at 140 w.p.m. on the pattern of Lok Sabha Secretariat, in addition to 160 w.p.m. test for Junior Parliamentary Reporters; ask them qualify the test at 160 w.p.m. within a specific period of their appointment as Junior Parliamentary Reporters;
- (iii) Start recruiting Audio only Reporters, on the pattern of British Parliament, who would be given extensive in-house training by the Secretariat before they perform their duties in the House and Committees.

U.K. PUBLIC SERVICE: AN OVERVIEW

(i) Strange, as it may sound, Indian and British civil services developed almost simultaneously (both of them grew out of Macaulay's minutes).

(ii) Much of the public sector was dismantled by Margaret Thatcher. (That's why there is a slogan in Britain: "Margaret Thatcher, Milk snatcher")

(iii) Later, Tony Blair, the then Prime Minister also effected some reforms and also fixed the term for the Parliament, though this legislation also keeps the option of dissolving the Parliament in case no Government is possible.

The learned Lecturer was a bit disturbed by the changing society and also increasing diversity that was also getting reflected in the emergence of new political parties and growing political uncertainties. He also quoted a verse: "We complain, we ask; but we know not the answer." In between he kept discussing the present Parliamentary system in Great Britain also.

(iv) The Select Committees help the ministries in drafting the bill.

(v) The party driven politics is the order of the day in Britain and all the officers remain in place even after the Government changes. It is the same in the European Union.

(vi) These days they have also evolved new thing called special advisers. They are chosen by the ministers to advise them.

(vii) The civil servants are chosen by Civil Service Commission and they are also trained by them through some in-house mechanism.

(viii) In France, they first choose the youth for the civil service through some entrance examination. They train them for four years, and then they are examined again.

(ix) In UK, most of the public services are rendered by the private sectors, not by public sector. But all such public service private sectors are subject to inspection and investigation.

(x) They have the ombudsman but there is a parliamentary filter to that. Any complaint has to go through the MP. He looks after all the public works done through the private concerns. Most of the complaints are disposed through the mediation. The ombudsman is appointed for seven years. He is appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, in consultation with the Select Committee. He need not necessarily be a judge. He can be any one.

(xi) There is also a Committee on Standardization in Public Life.

(xii) There is an unwritten code for the civil servants that they must not contradict the Minister, neither can they embarrass the Minister.

(xiii) Financial Service Ombudsman is also there. Local Ombudsmen are also at work.

COMMITTEES

(i) Committees are many and they are attached to both the Houses. One of their committees rooms is named after Moses.

(ii) In the committees, there is nothing to help a witness. He has to face the Committee singlehandedly.

(iii) They can set their own agenda and they can meet after any interval and go anywhere on study visits. The Committees are open not only to media but sometimes they also hold public meetings in order to know the people's view on the subject they are seized of.

(iv) Number of the members in various Committees are not the same. Both Chairman and the members of a committee are approved by the House.

(v) One strange thing we came to know was that the Appropriation Bills are never discussed. Nevertheless, they discuss the Queen's Address. It goes without saying that though some of these Committees, particularly the Chairmen's Committees, in which all the chairmen of all the Committees are members, has the right to grill even the Prime Minister.

(vi) About the Committee System, the Lecturer said that it was very often meant to allow a problem to die down, as it was well said by a wag about the Westminster way of solving the problem: "delay it, complicate it, make it very boring and then it dissipates."

INTERNAL AUDIT

The internal audit of the British Parliament is done by National audit, though it has no reporting rights in this case. The Internal Audit Service follows the Public Sector Internal Accounting Standards. It prepares Annual Internal Audit Plan and plans and reports individual assignments. The internal audit covers contract with third parties, risk based audit and financial control in the time of financial austerity and savings.

The House of Lords Audit Committee considers internal and external audit reports and other material, advises the Clerk of the Parliaments as Accounting Officer on the suitability of the annual internal audit work programme and monitors progress against the audit plan. It provides advice to the Clerk of the Parliaments in the exercise of his responsibilities as Accounting Officer and encourages value for money, good financial practice, appropriate internal controls, and effective governance throughout the administration of the House.

(i) The British Parliament also allows the trade union activities.

(ii) Though they have outsourced some of the services of Parliament, they ensure that the workers hired by the contractors are given London Living wage, which is higher than the minimum wage for London. They have the right to check the account books of the contractors. If still, the workers are given lower wages, then, they can take the help of political whistleblower. They can also complain to the Parliamentary authority. Nevertheless, the lecturer also admitted that there were instances of outsourcing not working properly.

(iii) By way of keeping the excellence and expenditure balanced, the Clerk of the House is also now the CEO of the Parliament.

MODERNIZATION OF PARLIAMENT

(i) The British Parliament came in its present shape in 1707 when Scotland merged. It has no office in basement.

(ii) They appoint their Clerk with great caution and it is said that a Clerk has to be capable to call the bluff.

(iii) The British Parliament is quite conscious about its role in the spread of democratic consciousness of the people. In order to make Parliament popular, they organize Parliament Week in different parts of the nation. They have institutional arrangements with the schools across the nation and whenever the children from these schools come to Parliament, they are given the facility of subsidized travel. It has different programmes for the students of different age groups and it also has some university course. They are also thinking of holding the Parliamentary sessions in different parts of the nation.

(iv) Canadian Parliament has started their sitting even through the video conferencing. There, one can call his constituency MP and meet him.

(v) UK Parliament has a Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology Services (PICT) which serves both the Houses of Parliament. It also has scientific and technical, library and research services.

(vi) South African Parliament calls members from State Assemblies also to participate, and German Parliament also does the same. Many other innovative proceedings have been adopted by the Parliaments of different nations.

(vii) Earlier, in the House of Commons, 15 minutes twice a week, were marked for the question- answer session with Prime Minister, but Mr. Tony Blair, then Prime Minister changed it to 30 minutes, once a week.

HOLDING POWER TO ACCOUNTABILITY

- (i) There have been several campaigns to instill probity in public life, as a result of which, 5 MPs and 2 Peers have ended up in jails.
- (ii) Public Accounts Committee can investigate into private business accounts also.
- (iii) The Lecturer rued the fact that companies like Google and Amazon earn the money in their nation and declare that in Luxemburg.
- (iv) Newspapers are not impartial. They regulate the cable TV but not the Press. Though, they have opened their proceedings to media, but the press photographers are prohibited. But the debate continues. The Press is free to lay honey trap and carry sting operations.
- (v) In case, there is more work than normal working hours, that is more than 38 hours x 40 weeks per year, then extra pay is given.
- (vi) The lecturer also admitted that there were instances of outsourcing not working properly.

EUROPEAN UNION

The very sight of European Parliament was gratifying to my history conscious mind. It was very pleasing to see the flags of all those 28 European Nations fluttering high in the same place. All these nations have been battling and warring against each other throughout their history.

European Parliament visit, though short, was very fruitful for my work. In European Parliament, equal weightage is given to all the languages.

(i) In all 22 languages; round the clock interpretation is done in Parliament as well as in Committees. In Council, which is a body of European Heads of State, the interpretation is done in three languages, viz, English, French and German.

(ii) There the interpreters are highly respected lot and sometimes the meetings of a committee or even sittings of Parliament has to be rescheduled if the interpreters are not available. There, the members do not have to give prior notice that they will speak in some particular language.

(iii) In committee meeting, however, an exception is made. Whenever, in a committee, there is no member from a particular language, then interpretation is not done in that language.

(iv) In Parliament's official places of work all meeting rooms are equipped with interpreting booths in line with international standards. They are soundproofed, air-conditioned, well lit and furnished with ergonomic chairs, and must give interpreters a full view of the meeting room that allows them to follow what is going on.

(v) If there are no permanent booths (on temporary missions away from the normal places of work, for example,) the interpreters work in portable simultaneous booths.

(vi) Again, all the relevant documents are provided to the interpreter, which may be of help to him, in his work. Not only this, European Parliament publishes all the documents in all the official languages of European Union.

(vii) In fact, language, to them, is one of the tools through which they assert their identity and culture as the language is the sole carrier of the

culture. Hence, the interpretation and translation are the two biggest departments in European Parliament

(viii) In European Union 40 % of their budget is farm subsidy and 80% of this subsidy goes to the farmers directly and one unintended consequence of this is that the royalty is the greatest beneficiary as they own most of the farmland.

(ix) They have 7 years budget and that too a fixed budget.

(x) European Parliament is that it is like Mexican Army, it has more officers and less soldiers.

(xi) They said that Indians seemed less interested in Europe. One of the Lecturers told bluntly that we went to England but did not cross the English Channel. I told them equally bluntly that historically Britain as well as Europe were great imperial powers and while Britain still retains its links with the people of its colonies, they do nothing like this. They have done nothing to refurbish their imperialist image. Now, if they start giving scholarships to India, it may turn tides in their favor as education in Britain is getting more and more costly, while in Europe it still remains practically free. I also suggested to them that they should open their Erasmus Project to India in a big way.

(i) European Parliament's structure is the most evolved form of democracy in the world.

(ii) All the member States of the European Union contribute one per cent of their total GDP to European Union. All the expenditure is decided by the consensus but the money is handed over to the concerned nation and European Union has no power of scrutiny.

(iii) Once an executive is appointed to the European Commission, he cannot be called back. So, they have, to some extent, independent bureaucracy also.

(iv) There is no opposition there, and all the works are done through consensus.

(v) European Union cannot have an independent foreign policy.

(vi) European Union votes for party. Basically, proportional representation is the common thread, though individual nation can always improvise upon this.

(vii) Most of the debates of European Parliament are held in Strassburg. Any Member can speak in his language any time he likes. Round-the-clock interpretation is available in the House as well as in Committees. Committees can be asked by the Parliament to resign. There are 24 committees in European parliament.

(viii) Though, most of the Europe seems to be in favour of European Union, in Britain there is certain sentiment against the European Union. In fact, in England there is now a Party called United Kingdom Independence Party which is against this union and while we were still in U.K. this Party managed to win its first ever seat in British Parliament in a by-election. In fact, these are the people who are all happy about the globalization of Capital but do not want the globalization of labour.

This report was presented to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat by the following members of the team that went to RIPA training programme from 6th to 17th October, 2014.

- (i) Shri Krishna Menon (Group Leader)**
- (ii) Shri Tara Datt Bhatt**
- (iii) Smt. Anuradha Sharma**
- (iv) Shri Subhash Chander**
- (v) Shri D.K. Gautam**
- (vi) Shri Guru Dutt**
- (vii) Ms. Chhaya Gupta**
- (viii) Shri Rajendra Prasad**
- (ix) Smt. Rashmi Gupta**