

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING AT RIPA INTERNATIONAL,
LONDON
(FROM OCTOBER 30th TO 11th November, 2011.

I was nominated to attend a customized Training Programme at RIPA International, London from 31st October to 11th November, 2011. This training programme was specially designed for the participants to understand British Parliamentary procedures & practices. There were total 10 participants out of which 06 were from India and 02 from South Africa and one each from Timor Leste and Nigeria. During the course I took active participation in the discussions. That gave me a tremendous opportunity to acquaint with the different functions of British Parliamentary democracy.

In the introductory session, Mr. Ian Church, the Director of the course, RIPA International, gave us a warm welcome and introduced the Training Course which *inter alia* included:

The administrative structure of the Westminster Parliament; Parliament and Politics in turmoil; the British constitution, the evolution of parliamentary factions, security and influence representation and expression, legislation, deliberation, her majesty's opposition, party discipline and the power of executive, reform, the party system, a tour d'horizon from Wilson to Cameron; Parliament, politicians and the media; the House of Lords, its administration and its changing constitutional position; Information services in the House of Commons and the Select Committee system in the House of Commons. Besides, guided visits to both the Houses of Parliament; Select Committee, Supreme Court; Vote Office- printing & distribution of parliamentary papers; Chamber of the House of Commons to see the

proceedings of the House; and Office of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association were also organized.

The programme was primarily based on the role and working of the British Parliament and that is why the experts were mostly from both the Houses of Parliament – the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The Course was focused on the practical aspects rather than its legal and political principles. The course 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 & functional aspects of the two Parliaments, viz. of United Kingdom and India.

During the visits to the various august institutions we were given opportunity to see the historic structures of the Westminster building, its corridors and chambers and experience its ambience. During the second time of visit to Westminster we witnessed the proceedings of the House Commons and came to know about the similarities and differences between British and Indian systems. We had also opportunity to see the main committee room where the Select Committee holds the committee meetings. We were made aware of the seating arrangements for members, officers, witnesses and public. Likewise, we were also taken to Supreme Court and Office of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which was a wonderful experience in itself.

Since it was my first visit of a foreign country, 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, maintained cordial relationships with my colleagues and helped in building team spirit among ourselves.

My visit to RIPA International has given me a valuable opportunity for all-round development, particularly in the field of global outlook. The whole training programme was very useful. I as an individual got invaluable experience. I am extremely grateful and thankful to the respected Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha and the Training Unit 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 training programme also in future.

(GIRIJA SHANKAR PRASAD)
Deputy Director

Training Cell