

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Constitution

The Committee on Estimates, constituted for the first time in 1950, is a Parliamentary Committee consisting of 30 members, elected every year by the Lok Sabha from amongst its Members. The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst its members. A Minister cannot be elected as a member of the Committee and if a member after selection to the Committee is appointed a Minister, the member ceases to be a Member of the Committee from the date of such appointment.

Term of Office

The term of office of the Committee is one year.

Functions

The functions of the Estimates Committee are:

- to report what economies, improvements in organisation, efficiency or administrative reform, consistent with the policy underlying the estimates may be effected;
- to suggest alternative policies in order to bring about efficiency and economy in administration;
- to examine whether the money is well laid out within the limits of the policy implied in the estimates; and
- to suggest the form in which the estimates shall be presented to Parliament.

The Committee does not exercise its functions in relation to such Public Undertakings as are allotted to the Committee on Public Undertakings by the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Lok Sabha or by the Speaker.

Working

Soon after it is constituted, the Committee selects such of the estimates pertaining to a Ministry/Department of the Central Government or such of the statutory and other bodies of the Central Government as may seem fit to the Committee. The Committee also examines matters of special interest which may arise or come to light in the course of its work or which are specially referred to it by the House or the Speaker.

The Committee calls for preliminary materials from the Ministry/Department, statutory and other Government bodies in regard to the subjects selected for examination and also memoranda from non-officials connected with the subjects for the use of the members of the Committee.

The Committee, from time to time, appoints one or more Sub-Committees/Study Groups for carrying out detailed examination of various subjects.

If it appears to the Committee that it is necessary for the purpose of its examination that an on-the-spot study should be made, the Committee may, with the approval of the Speaker, decide to undertake visits to make a study of any particular matter, project or establishment, either as a whole Committee or by dividing itself into Study Groups. Notes relating to the institutions/offices, etc., to be visited are called for in advance from the concerned Ministries/Departments, etc., and circulated to the members of the Committee/Sub-Committee/Study Group.

When the Committee/Sub-Committee/Study Group is on Study Visit, only informal sittings are held at the place of visit. At such sittings, neither evidence is recorded nor any decisions are taken. All discussions held by the Committee with the representative of the Ministries/Departments, non-official organisations, etc. are treated as confidential and no one having access to the discussions directly or indirectly should communicate to the Press or any unauthorised person any information about matters taken up during the discussions.

Later in the light of informal discussions during Study Visits, memoranda received from non-officials and information collected from the Ministry/Department concerned and other sources, nonofficial and official witnesses are invited to give evidence at formal sittings of the Committee held in Parliament House Complex, New Delhi.

The Observations/Recommendations of the Committee are embodied in its Reports which are presented to Lok Sabha.

After a Report has been presented to Lok Sabha, the Ministry or Department concerned is required to take action on the Observations/Recommendations conclusions contained in the Report within a period of six months or as directed by the Committee. The replies of the Government are examined by the Committee and an Action Taken Report is presented to Lok Sabha. The replies to the recommendations contained in the Action Taken Reports are laid on the Table of Lok Sabha in the form of Statements.

Achievements

Since its inception in April, 1950, the Committee has presented 1121 Reports covering almost all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India. Out of these, 627 are the Original Reports and 494 are Reports on Action Taken by the Government on earlier Reports of the Committee as on 13 December, 2018.