

STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The exponential growth in the sphere of activities of the executive and the growing complexities of governance have resulted in the Parliament relying on its committees to a greater extent for ensuring accountability of the Executive to the Legislature. As the Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) are the specialized entities mandated with the onerous and intricate task of Ministry/Department specific oversight, the Parliament transacts a great volume of its business through these Committees. The Standing Committee on Information Technology, one of the 24 Departmentally Related Committees in existence, is constituted under Rule 331C of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The following Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are under its jurisdiction:

- (i) Ministry of Communications;
 - (a) Department of Posts
 - (b) Department of Telecommunications
- (ii) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; and
- (iii) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Composition of the Committee

The Committee consist of 31 members; 21 members from Lok Sabha, nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha nominated by the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha. The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst the members of the Committee from Lok Sabha. The term of office of the members of the Committee does not exceed one year.

Functions of the Committee

The Committee have been entrusted with the following functions:

- (a) to consider the Demands for Grants of the concerned Ministries/Departments and make reports on the same to the Houses;
- (b) to examine such Bills pertaining to the concerned Ministries/Departments as are referred to the Committee by the Speaker, Lok Sabha or the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha as the case may be, and make reports thereon;
- (c) to consider Annual Reports of the concerned Ministries/Departments and make reports thereon; and
- (d) to consider national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses, if referred to the Committee by the Speaker, Lok Sabha or the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha as the case may be, and make reports thereon.

Working of the Committee

Procedure relating to consideration of Demands for Grants

After the general discussion on the Budget in the House is over, the Lok Sabha is adjourned for a fixed period. The Committee consider the Demands for Grants of the Ministries/Departments under its jurisdiction during the aforesaid period and present/lay reports. There is a separate Report on the Demands for Grants of each Ministry/Department. The Report on Demands for Grants does not suggest anything of the nature of cut motions. The Demands for Grants are considered by the House in the light of the Reports of the Committee.

Procedure relating to consideration of Bills

The Committee considers only such Bills introduced in either of the Houses as are referred to it by the Speaker, Lok Sabha or the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha as the case may be. The Committee considers the general principles and clauses of the Bills referred to it and makes Reports thereon within the given time.

Procedure relating to examination of Annual Reports

The Committee also selects other subjects for examination on the basis of Annual Reports of the Ministries/Departments under its jurisdiction.

Procedure relating to examination of National Long-Term Policy Documents

The Committee consider national long-term policy documents presented to the Parliament and referred to it by the Speaker, Lok Sabha or Chairperson, Rajya Sabha and make Reports on such documents.

Appointment of Sub-Committees/Study Groups

The Committee may appoint Sub-Committees/Study Groups from amongst the members of the Committee with a view to making detailed study/examination of the subjects selected by it as also for scrutinizing the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the original Reports and for considering procedural and general matters. The Chairperson/Convenor/Alternate Convenor of the Sub-Committee/Study Group shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee from amongst the members of the Sub-Committee/Study Group.

On-the-spot Visits/Study Tours

In order to have a first hand experience of the implementation of various Schemes concerning the subjects under examination, the Committee or its Sub-Committee(s)/Study Group(s) may with prior permission of the Speaker, undertake, if necessary, on the spot visits to various institutions and establishments falling under the administrative control of the Ministries/ Departments under the purview of the Committee.

Reports and Minutes

The Observations/Recommendations of the Committee on subjects examined are contained in their Reports which after adoption by the Committee and factual verification by the Ministries/Departments concerned, are presented to Lok Sabha/laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha by the Chairperson and the authorized Members. The Minutes of the sittings of the Committee are also presented to the House alongwith the Reports.

Action Taken Reports

The Recommendations of the Committee have persuasive value and are treated as considered advice given by the Committee. The Demands for Grants and the Bills, which are reported upon by the Committee are considered by the Houses in the light of the recommendations of the Committee. In respect of Reports on Demands for Grants, national basic long term policy documents and other subjects, the Ministries/Departments concerned are required to take action on the recommendations contained in the Report and furnish action taken replies thereon, within three months. Action Taken notes received from the Ministries/ Departments are examined by the Committee and Action Taken Reports thereon are presented to Lok Sabha/laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha.

Proceedings, Draft Reports and Minutes of the Committee are treated as confidential until the concerned Reports are presented to Parliament.

Statement made by the Minister under direction 73A of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha

In terms of direction 73A, the minister concerned makes a statement once in six months in the House regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the DRSCs with regard to his Ministry. This is aimed at ensuring that the recommendations of the Standing Committee are taken note of at the highest level by the Government for follow up action.

Reports Presented by the Committee

So far the Standing Committee on Information Technology has presented 305 Reports to the Parliament. The Lok Sabha-wise break up is as under:-

<u>Lok Sabha</u>	<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Reports Presented</u>			
		DFG	Subjects	Bills	ATRs
Tenth Lok Sabha	*1991-1996	06	07	04	12
Eleventh Lok Sabha	1996-1998	06	03	01	05
Twelfth Lok Sabha	1998-1999	06	05	00	04
Thirteenth Lok Sabha	1999-2004	15	16**	02	32
Fourteenth Lok Sabha	2004-2009	20	09	03	36
Fifteenth Lok Sabha	2009-2014	20	05	04	24
Sixteenth Lok Sabha	2014-2019	20	10	00	30
Total		93	55	14	143
Grand Total					305

* The Committee was constituted for the first time on the 8th April, 1993 during the Tenth Lok Sabha. It was known as Committee on Communications till 1998-99. The Committee was renamed as Committee on Information Technology from 1999-2000 Term when the Ministry of Information Technology was also brought under its mandate.

** Includes one Report on the Study Visit of the Committee to Srinagar, Jammu, Chandigarh and Shimla.