

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Introduction

Each House of Parliament and its Committees collectively and members of each House individually enjoy certain rights, privileges and immunities without which they cannot perform their functions efficiently and effectively. The object of parliamentary privilege is to safeguard the freedom, the authority and the dignity of Parliament. They are enjoyed by individual members, because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its members and by each House collectively for the protection of its members and the vindication of its own authority and dignity. But they are available to individual members only insofar as they are necessary for the House to perform its functions freely without any let or hindrance. They do not exempt the members from the obligations to the society which apply to other citizens.

Constitution of the Committee

This Committee consists of 15 members nominated by the Speaker. Its function is to examine every question involving breach of privilege of the House or of the members of any Committee thereof referred to it by the House or by the Speaker. It determines with reference to the facts of each case whether a breach of privilege is involved and makes suitable recommendations in its report.

It also states the procedure to be followed by the House in giving effect to the recommendations made by it. When a question of privilege is referred to the Committee by the House, the report of the Committee is presented to the House by the Chairman or, in his absence, by any member of the Committee. Where a question of privilege is referred to the Committee by the Speaker under Rule 227, the report of the Committee is presented to the Speaker who may pass final orders thereon or direct that it be laid on the Table of the House. With the coming into force *w.e.f.* 18.03.1986 of the Members of Lok Sabha (Disqualification on ground of Defection) Rules, 1985, made by the Speaker under paragraph 8 of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution, an additional function has been assigned to the Committee. The Speaker may refer to the Committee any petition regarding disqualification of a member on ground of defection for making a preliminary inquiry and submitting a report to him. The procedure to be followed by the Committee in these cases is so far as may be same as in applicable to questions of breach of privilege.

In 17th Lok Sabha, the Committee has been constituted by Hon'ble Speaker on 9th October, 2019.