

CHAPTER VIII

INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

90. Constitution and Functions of Indian Parliamentary Group.— (1) The Indian Parliamentary Group is an autonomous body formed in the year 1949 in pursuance of a motion adopted by the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on 16 August, 1948. The Speaker of Lok Sabha is the *ex-officio* President and Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha and Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha are *ex-officio* Vice-Presidents of the Group. The Secretary-General of Lok Sabha is the *ex-officio* Secretary-General of the Indian Parliamentary Group. The management and control of all affairs of the Group vest in the Executive Committee, consisting of the President, the two Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, and not more than 20 Members. The treasurer and members of the Executive Committee are elected at the Annual General Meeting from amongst the life members of the Group. Any sitting Member of the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha may become a life member of the Group on payment of the subscription fee of Rs. 1000.

(2) The aims and objectives of the Indian Parliamentary Group are:—

- (i) to promote personal contacts between Members of Parliament;
- (ii) to study questions of public importance that are likely to come up before Parliament and arrange Seminars and discussions and Orientation Programmes and bring out publications for the dissemination of information to the Members of the Indian Parliamentary Group;
- (iii) to arrange lectures on political, defence, economic, social and educational problems by Members of Parliament and distinguished persons;
- (iv) to arrange visits to foreign countries with a view to developing contacts with Members of other Parliaments; and
- (v) to function as (a) National Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and (b) Main Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in India.

(3) (i) Inter-Parliamentary Union—The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is an international organisation of the Parliaments of sovereign States. Its aim is to work for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative institution. The IPU fosters contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and Parliamentarians of all member countries and contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions. IPU also expresses its views on all contemporary questions of international importance for necessary effective implementation of parliamentary actions and suggests avenues for improving the working standard and capacity of international institutions.

At present, the IPU consists of 180 Parliaments of sovereign nations and 12 Associate members. The IPU holds two Assemblies in a year. The First Assembly is held in the first half of the year *i.e.* in March-April and the Second Session of the IPU Assembly falls in the second half of the year *i.e.* in the month of October/November.

The advantages of participation in the Conferences of IPU, are as follows:—

- (a) The events provide an opportunity to study and understand contemporary changes/reforms taking place in various countries of the world.
- (b) It helps members of Indian Parliamentary Delegation develop contacts with the Parliamentarians of the member countries of the IPU. In the recent past, members of India Group have been holding various positions on the IPU bodies namely, office bearers in different Committees of the IPU, Rapporteurs, membership of Drafting Committees etc. and by virtue of the same, the Group has been successful in putting forward effectively the view point of India on various important issues dealt in the IPU meetings.

For further details about IPU and participation of Indian Parliamentary Delegations in the IPU Assembly, the following website may be visited: www.ipu.org and <https://sansad.in/ls/conferences>.

(ii) The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is one of the oldest established organisations in the Commonwealth. Founded in 1911, it is a membership association which brings together Members, irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture, who are united by community of interest, respect for the

rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and by the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. Its mission is to promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy, with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth. The Association is made up of over 180 Legislatures (or Branches) divided up between nine geographic regions of the Commonwealth. It offers a vast opportunity for Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to collaborate on issues of mutual interest and to share good practice. The Secretariat of the CPA is in London. The main advantages of membership of the Indian Parliamentary Group insofar as it functions as the Main Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in India, are as follows:—

- (a) *Conference and Seminars*: Membership provides an opportunity for participation in the plenary and regional conferences, seminars, visits and exchanges of delegations.
- (b) *Publications*: All members of the Indian Parliamentary Group to receive, free of charge, 'The Parliamentarian' quarterly published by the CPA Secretariat, London. Members can also contribute Articles for Publication in the Journal.
- (c) *Research Support*: The CPA has the Commonwealth Parliamentary Research Service (CPRS) which provides electronic communication of 180 Legislatures (or Branches). Members who may need research support may use its service.
- (d) *Introductions*: The CPA Branches readily assist in arranging introductions for members visiting other jurisdictions. A letter from the visiting member's Branch Secretary is usually helpful in this and other contexts.
- (e) *Parliamentary Facilities*: Members visiting other Commonwealth countries are normally accorded Parliamentary courtesies, specially access to debates and local members.
- (f) *Travel Facilities*: Some Branches provide for a designated number of their members annually to undertake study tours of Commonwealth and other countries to compare political and procedural developments. Other Branches arrange *ad hoc* visits.

For further details about CPA, the following website may be visited:

- (1) www.cpahq.org; and
- (2) www.ipg.nic.in

91. Official Foreign Visits of Indian Parliamentary Delegations.— Decisions regarding the official visits of Indian Parliamentary Delegations (IPDs) are taken by Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha. On receipt of formal invitations from foreign Parliaments and multilateral inter-parliamentary bodies viz. IPU and CPA etc., the Lok Sabha Secretariat in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs processes the invitations and places the proposals for approval of Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha. After nomination of the members of delegation, the Conference and Protocol Branch of the Lok Sabha Secretariat provides secretarial and protocol assistance to the members of IPDs.

92. Non-Official Visits abroad by Members of Parliament.—

(1) The following guidelines are to be observed by Members in connection with their non-official visits abroad:—

- (i) If any invitation from any foreign source namely, Government of any country, foreign organizations, etc. is received directly by a member, a copy of such invitation letter giving full details of the purpose of the visits and the hospitality to be accepted should be sent to:
 - (a) The Ministry of External Affairs for political clearance; and
 - (b) the Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs [Foreigners Division (FCRA), NDCC-II Building, Jai Singh Road, Near Jantar Mantar, New Delhi] for accepting any foreign hospitality being offered during visits abroad.
- (ii) On receipt of political clearance from the Ministry of External Affairs and permission from FCRA by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Member concerned shall keep the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha informed, *inter-alia*, of the purpose of the visit and the hospitality proposed to be received.
- (iii) It may kindly be ensured that none of their activities during those visits give an unintended impression that Members are on an official visit on behalf of Parliament.

- (iv) Before accepting the hospitality the members should satisfy themselves about the credentials of the organization/institution extending the hospitality.

(2) As per OM No. AA/122/43/2006 dated 11th September, 2006 and 3rd October, 2016 issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, the Indian Missions/Posts are not authorized to incur expenditure on private visits of dignitaries/officials. However, on receipt of a request from the Members, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Embassy/Post concerned will be requested by the Lok Sabha Secretariat to extend protocol assistance to the Members on arrival/departure on their private visits abroad to the extent possible and permissible. The above is also applicable to Members travelling abroad in their personal capacity for participation in Conferences, Seminars etc. by virtue of their expertise and domain knowledge with or without foreign hospitality. For the above purpose, the Members are requested to send information of their visits abroad stating the purpose, to the Secretary General at least 3 weeks in advance so that the Ministry of External Affairs and the concerned Indian Mission posts could be informed about the same.

93. Outstanding Parliamentarian Award.— As per decision of the Indian Parliamentary Group, an award for Outstanding Parliamentarian was instituted in the year 1995 to be given annually. A Committee of five persons, constituted by the Speaker, Lok Sabha, invites and finalizes the nomination for the Award. The following were given the Outstanding Parliamentarians Awards: Shri Chandra Shekhar (1995); Shri Somnath Chatterjee (1996); Shri Pranab Mukherjee (1997); Shri S. Jaipal Reddy (1998); Shri L.K. Advani (1999); Shri Arjun Singh (2000); Shri Jaswant Singh (2001); Dr. Manmohan Singh (2002); Shri Sharad Pawar (2003); Smt. Sushma Swaraj (2004); Shri P. Chidambaram (2005); Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar (2006); Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni (2007); Shri Mohan Singh (2008); Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi (2009); Shri Arun Jaitely (2010); Dr. Karan Singh (2011); Shri Sharad Yadav (2012) Dr. (Smt.) Najma A. Heptulla (2013); Shri Hukmdev Narayan Yadav (2014); Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad (2015); Shri Dinesh Trivedi (2016); and Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab (2017).

94. Parliamentary Friendship Groups.— To encourage bilateral relations, Parliamentary Friendship Groups are constituted with other countries.

The aims and objectives of the Group are to maintain political, social and cultural contacts between the two countries and to assist in exchanges of information and experiences on issues relating to Parliamentary activities.

95. IPG Newsletter.— An uninterrupted flow of information to Members regarding the activities of the Group is maintained through IPG Newsletter brought out every quarter. The IPG Newsletter is available on the website of IPG *i.e.* ipg@nic.in

96. Membership of IPG.— Membership of the Indian Parliamentary Group is open to all Members of Parliament and ex-Members of Parliament. A Member of Parliament can become a life Member of the Group on Payment of life subscription of Rs. 1000/-.

Members of Parliament desirous of joining the Group may send an application together with the life subscription to the Secretary-General of Lok Sabha (who is the *ex-officio* Secretary-General of the Group), Parliament House, New Delhi, in the prescribed form available in the Parliamentary Notice Offices of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and also in the Conference and Protocol Branch of the Lok Sabha Secretariat.