

Demarcation of Responsibilities in Government of India

At times, notices of questions tabled by the Members are addressed to Ministers who are not concerned with the subject-matter thereof. This necessitates transfer of questions from one Ministry to another causing avoidable inconvenience to the Members themselves. They may, therefore, address the notices of questions to the Ministers who are responsible for their subject matter. For this purpose, the Members may refer to the link “Demarcation of Responsibilities in Government of India” available on the Lok Sabha Website which is accessible through the following path:

loksabha.nic.in → Business → Questions → Information and Rules → Demarcation of Responsibilities in Government of India

sansad.in/ls → Business → Questions → Information and Rules → Demarcation of Responsibilities in Government of India

It indicates the subjects for which the various Ministers are responsible for answering questions in Lok Sabha.

Procedure regarding Questions

Members are informed that the notices of Questions can be given after issuance of summons. **In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and also to achieve the objective of paperless Parliament, the Members are requested to submit the notices of Questions through Member's Portal.** However, the printed forms are also available in the Parliamentary Notice Office.

The procedure for Questions is governed by Rules 32 to 54 of the „Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha“ and Directions 10 to 18 of the „Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha“. In particular, attention is invited to the following provisions of Rules/Directions concerning admissibility of notices of Questions:-

Speaker to decide admissibility

43(1). The Speaker shall decide whether a question, or a part thereof, is or is not admissible under these rules and may disallow any question, or a part thereof, when in the opinion of the Speaker, it is an abuse of the right of questioning or is calculated to obstruct or prejudicially affect the procedure of the House or is in contravention of these rules.

Admissibility of Questions

41(2). The right to ask a question is governed by the following conditions, namely:-

- (i) it shall be clearly and precisely expressed and shall not be too general incapable of any specific answer or in the nature of a leading question;
- (ii) it shall not bring in any name or statement not strictly necessary to make the question intelligible;
- (iii) if it contains a statement, the Member shall make oneself responsible for the accuracy of the statement;
- (iv) it shall not contain arguments, inferences, ironical expressions, imputations, epithets or defamatory statements;
- (v) it shall not ask for an expression of opinion or the solution of an abstract legal question or of a hypothetical proposition;
- (vi) it shall not ask as to the character or conduct of any person except in that person's official or public capacity;
- (vii) it shall not ordinarily exceed 150 words;
- (viii) it shall not relate to a matter which is not primarily the concern of the Government of India;
- (ix) it shall not ask about proceedings in the Committee which have not been placed before the House by a report from the Committee;
- (x) it shall not reflect on the character or conduct of any person whose conduct can only be challenged on a substantive motion;
- (xi) it shall not make or imply a charge of a personal character;
- (xii) it shall not raise questions of policy too large to be dealt with within the limits of an answer to a question;
- (xiii) it shall not repeat in substance questions already answered or to which an answer has been refused;
- (xiv) it shall not ask for information on trivial matters;
- (xv) it shall not ordinarily ask for information on matters of past history;

- (xvi) it shall not ask for information set forth in accessible documents or in ordinary works of reference;
- (xvii) it shall not raise matters under the control of bodies or persons not primarily responsible to the Government of India;
- (xviii) it shall not ask for information on matter which is under adjudication by a court of law having jurisdiction in any part of India;
- (xix) it shall not relate to a matter with which a Minister is not officially concerned;
- (xx) it shall not refer discourteously to a friendly foreign country;
- (xxi) it shall not seek information about matters which are in their nature secret such as composition of Cabinet Committees, Cabinet discussions, or advice given to the President in relation to any matter in respect of which there is a constitutional, statutory or conventional obligation not to disclose information;
- (xxii) it shall not ordinarily ask for information on matters which are under consideration of a Parliamentary Committee; and
- (xxiii) it shall not ordinarily ask about matters pending before any statutory tribunal or statutory authority performing any judicial or quasi-judicial functions or any commission or court of enquiry appointed to enquire into, or investigate, any matter but may refer to matters concerned with procedure or subject or stage of enquiry, if it is not likely to prejudice the consideration of the matter by the tribunal or commission or court of enquiry.

Direction 10-A. Besides the conditions of admissibility of questions mentioned in Rule 41, a question shall be inadmissible on any of the following grounds:-

- (i) it seeks information on matters which tend to encourage fissiparous and divisive tendencies and weaken the unity and integrity of the country;
- (ii) it relates to a matter of day-to-day administration or tends to further the interest of an individual or a few individuals;
- (iii) it relates to a matter falling primarily within the jurisdiction of the Chief Election Commissioner, C & AG, courts and other such functionaries;
- (iv) it relates to petitions and memoranda received by Ministers which are not of public importance;

- (v) it relates to a matter under negotiation with a government of other country and its disclosure may affect the course of negotiations to the detriment of the national interests; and
- (vi) it relates to a matter within the jurisdiction of the Speaker.

Members are requested to kindly take note of the above provisions while tabling notices of Questions so as to avoid disallowance of the questions on the above grounds.

No. 7810

Question Branch

Questions of Excessive Length

Attention of Members is invited to Rule 41(2) (vii) of the “Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha” which is reproduced below:-

“41(2) The right to ask a question is governed by the following conditions, namely:-

* * * * *

(vii) it shall not ordinarily exceed 150 words.”

Sometimes notices of questions tabled by the Members are of excessive length and these have either to be disallowed or referred back to the Members.

Members are, therefore, requested to keep in view the above provisions, while tabling notices of questions.

No. 7811

Question Branch

Admissibility of Questions seeking information upto Block or District levels about implementation of Centrally Sponsored Programmes/Schemes

As information about block or district-wise outlays/expenditure/physical targets/achievements is primarily the concern of State Government, such information is not normally reported to or monitored by the Union Government. Members are, therefore, informed that questions seeking information about implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Programmes/Schemes at block or district levels are ordinarily inadmissible.

Members are, therefore, requested to keep in view the above position, while tabling notices of questions.
