

COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

Composition

The Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes consists of 30 members — twenty elected by Lok Sabha every year from amongst its members according to the principle of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote and ten members of Rajya Sabha elected by that House for being associated with the Committee. This system of election ensures that each Party/Group is represented on the Committee in proportion to its respective strength in the two Houses.

Process of Election

2. In the beginning of Budget Session and before the term of the Committee ends on 30th April each year a motion is moved in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs or Chairperson of the Committee, if in office, calling upon members of the House to elect from amongst themselves 20 members to the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. After the motion is adopted, a programme fixing the dates

for filing the nominations/ withdrawal of candidature and the election, if necessary, is notified in Lok Sabha Bulletin—Part II. On receipt of nominations, a list of persons who have filed nomination papers is put up on the Notice Board. In case the number of members who has filed their nomination is equal to the number of members to be elected, after expiry of time for withdrawal of candidatures, the members are declared elected and the result published in Bulletin—Part II. If the number of members who has filed their nomination after withdrawal is more than the number of members to be elected, election is held on the stipulated date and result of election published in Bulletin—Part II.

Association of Members of Rajya Sabha

3. Another motion is moved in Lok Sabha recommending to Rajya Sabha to elect ten members of that House for being associated with the Committee. After adoption, the motion is transmitted to Rajya Sabha through a message. Rajya Sabha after election of ten members from amongst its members communicates their names to Lok Sabha.

Appointment of Chairperson

4. The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst the members elected to the Committee.

Minister not to be a Member of the Committee

5. A Minister is not eligible to be elected as a member of the Committee and if a member, after her/his election to the Committee is appointed a Minister she/he ceases to be a member of the Committee from the date of such appointment.

Term of Office

6. The term of office of the members of the Committee is not to exceed one year.

Functions of the Committee

7. The important functions of the Committee *inter-alia* are to consider the reports submitted by the National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes and to report on the action taken by Government thereon, to examine the representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in services of Central Government Departments, Central Public Undertakings, Nationalised Banks, Statutory and Semi-Government bodies, to review the working of welfare programmes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Union Territories. The Committee also examine such other matters as may deem fit to the Committee or are specifically referred to it by the House or by the Speaker. The Committee can also examine the implementation of various programmes

for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by State Governments provided funds are made available partly or wholly by the Central Government.

Selection of Subjects for Examination

8. The Committee select soon after its constitution such subjects pertaining to the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as they may deem fit. The Committee also examine matters of special interest to the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which may arise or come to the light in the course of its working or which may specifically be referred to it by the House or by the Speaker.

Appointment of sub-Committees/Study Groups

9. The Committee appoint from time to time one or more sub-Committees/Study Groups for carrying out detailed examination of various subjects selected by the Committee. The Committee also appoint a Study Group on Action Taken Reports for examining statements showing action taken by the Government on various recommendations made by the Committee in their Reports. Appointments to the sub-Committees/Study Groups are made by the Chairperson after ascertaining the wishes of the members. The Study Group on Action Taken Reports generally consists of the Conveners of all the Study Groups with the Chairperson of the Committee as its Chairperson. Conveners of the Study Groups are nominated by the Chairperson.

Calling for Information from Government

10. The Committee call, in the first instance, preliminary material from the Ministries/Departments of the Central Government concerned with the subjects under examination on the basis of questionnaires sent to them. After studying the material, a further questionnaire for written replies is sent to them, if considered necessary.

Evidence of Officials/Non-Officials

11. The Committee take oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministries/Departments and Central Public Undertakings etc., concerned with the subjects under examination. The Committee can also take oral evidence of non-officials whose evidence is considered to be of help to the Committee in its investigation. Verbatim record of the proceedings is kept.

Ministers not called before the Committee

12. The Minister is not called before the Committee either to give evidence or for consultation by the Committee.

Study Tours

13. The Committee also undertake Study Tours to various States and Union Territories to make on-the-spot study of the subjects under examination and also other

problems concerning the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. After taking the prior permission of the Speaker for undertaking these tours, the Committee are generally divided into two Study Groups. The discussions held by the Study Groups are of informal nature and for the purpose of gathering information in connection with the subjects under examination by the Committee. During the tours, the Study Groups also meet the representatives of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes organisations and associations and receive memoranda and representations from them relating to their problems. A brief record is kept of the various discussions held during the tour and detailed tour reports are prepared which are got approved by the Chairperson/Convener and then laid on the Table of the two Houses of Parliament. Copies of the tour reports are also placed in the Parliament Library for use of the members.

Report and Minutes

14. The conclusions of the Committee on a subject are contained in its report which after its adoption by the Committee is presented by the Chairperson to the Lok Sabha. A copy of the Report is also laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha. Minutes of the sitting of the Committee are presented/laid alongwith the report on the Table of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha respectively.

The Reports of the Committee are adopted by consensus among the members. Accordingly, there is no system of appending minutes of dissent to the Report.

Action Taken Reports

15. After presentation of Report to Lok Sabha, copies thereof are forwarded to the Ministry or the Department concerned which is required to take action on the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Report and furnish action taken replies thereon within three months.

Action Taken replies received from the Ministries/ Departments are examined by the Committee and then action taken reports of the Committee are presented to Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha in the usual manner.

Statements of Action Taken on Action Taken Reports

16. Replies received from Government in respect of Recommendations contained in the Action Taken Reports are also laid on the Table of Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha in the form of Statements.

Disposal of Complaints/Representations

17. Committee also receives complaints/ representations from the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe people and also from various SC/ST

Welfare Associations ventilating their grievances on matters pertaining to their welfare. The complaints/representations received in the Secretariat are examined and genuine cases are referred to Central/State Governments authorities for redressal or comments.

[The constitution and working of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are governed by Rules 253 to 286, 331A and 331B of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and Directions 48 to 73 of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.]

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PREFACE

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and describes the procedure regarding Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the Directions issued by the Speaker under the Rules of Procedure and Rules of Procedure of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Internal Working). It is intended to serve as a handy guide for ready reference.

The information contained in this Abstract is, however, not exhaustive. It will, therefore, be prudent to refer to and rely on the original sources for full information.

NEW DELHI

Secretary General