

SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION IN LOK SABHA

Constitutional Provision and use of different languages in Lok Sabha

Under article 120 of the Constitution, the business of both the Houses of Parliament is transacted in Hindi or in English. In order to enable the Members to communicate directly across the language barrier, a two-channel system of simultaneous interpretation from Hindi to English and vice-versa was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 7 September, 1964. Subsequently, to facilitate Members who could not express themselves adequately in Hindi or in English, it was decided to extend the facility of simultaneous interpretation in some of the languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. In November 1969, this facility was extended to some more languages of the Eighth Schedule. In Lok Sabha the facility of simultaneous interpretation is available in the following languages namely: **Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Manipuri, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.** At present as per the initiative of the H.S. and with the co-operation of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, an arrangement has been made for extending the interpretation facilities in the House for

few of the languages for which interpreters are not available in the Lok Sabha Secretariat. The information regarding the languages in which interpretation facility is available is also published in Bulletin—Part II issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat before the commencement of each session of the Parliament.

Direction by Speaker regarding use of languages other than Hindi/English

2. A member who wishes to speak in a language other than Hindi or English is required [under Direction 115 B(1)* by the Speaker] to give at least half-an-hour notice to the officer at the Table to enable the Interpreter concerned to take her/his seat in the Interpreters' booth before the member speaks.

Use of Languages other than Hindi/English and languages in which interpretation is made available

3. A Member desirous of making a speech in any language other than Hindi, English or the languages for which interpretation facility is not available, has to furnish to the officer at the table or the Parliamentary Notice Office, three authenticated copies of the translation of her/his speech in Hindi or English in advance for use of the interpreters and for incorporation in the official report

* Direction 115B (1) as added to the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in 1989 contained 12 languages. This number has now gone upto 16.

of the proceedings of the House. When a Member does not furnish such translation and speaks in a language other than Hindi, English or the languages for which interpretation facility is not available, it is mentioned to that effect in the official report of the proceedings of the House that the Member did not furnish the translation of her/his speech in Hindi or English.

4. The entire proceedings of the House in Hindi are simultaneously interpreted in English. Similarly the entire proceedings in English are interpreted in Hindi. Speeches made in languages other than Hindi and English for which interpretation facility is available are also simultaneously interpreted into English and Hindi. However, the facility of simultaneous interpretation of speeches from English or Hindi into these regional languages has not yet been introduced.

5. A member or members (not more than two) in whose name(s) a question appears in the list of starred questions may ask supplementary in any of the languages for which interpretation facility is available, provided an advance notice in this regard is given not later than 3 P.M. on the working day preceding the day on which the question is listed for oral answer.

6. This interpretation facility is now available during the Question Hour also and as per the existing practice it can be availed of not only by Members in whose name

the question appears in the list of Starred Questions but also by any other Member.

Computer-controlled Integrated System for Simultaneous Interpretation

7. Simultaneous Interpretation has become an indispensable service of the House. This Service provides simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings of the Lok Sabha in Hindi and English so as to enable Hon'ble Speaker, Ministers and Members not knowing the floor language follow the proceedings of the House. A new Computer-controlled Integrated System for simultaneous interpretation has been introduced since the twelfth session of 13th Lok Sabha. Under this integrated system, each member of Parliament has the option to select a language of her/his choice from among English, Hindi or the regional language (*i.e.*, the floor language) to be heard over the earphone. For this purpose, each seat in the House has been provided with an earphone and a Language Selector Switch Assembly.

8. Before the beginning of each Session, Hon'ble Members are informed of this procedure and also of the working of the system-use of equipment etc. through a Bulletin issued by the Secretariat. A number of such earphones have also been provided in the Rajya Sabha Members' Gallery, Special Box for Distinguished Visitors, Press Gallery and Official Gallery in order to make the interpretation facility available there too.

Interpretation of the Proceedings of Parliamentary Committees etc.

9. Arrangement for simultaneous interpretation exists in all the Committee rooms in Parliament House, Parliament House Annexe, Parliament House Annexe Extension and Parliament Library Building where meetings of Parliamentary Committees, Departmentally Related Standing Committees, Consultative Committees attached with various ministries etc. are held.

10. Simultaneous Interpretation Service provides simultaneous interpretation facility to different Ministries of Government of India for their meetings as and when requested.

Advance Copies of Documents and Secrecy

11. Copies of various statements and speeches made by the Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and other Ministers or the gists of such material are given in advance to the Interpreters.

This is especially true when the Minister's speech is proposed to be made while initiating discussion on a Bill or a Motion, intervening in a debate when the intervention is preplanned or while replying to the debate when the reply has been or can be prepared in advance. Texts of all such statements or speeches are treated by the Interpreters as secret until the time these are made public

by the Speaker, the Prime Minister or the Ministers concerned themselves.

Preparation of English/Hindi version of the Speech

12. Speeches made on the floor of the House in various regional languages are translated into English/Hindi by the concerned Interpreter, for inclusion in the official report of the proceedings of the House with a footnote indicating the language in which the original speech was delivered. Interpreters of regional languages are also called upon to render translation into English/Hindi of various documents such as speeches, press reports, letters, petitions etc. received by the Lok Sabha Secretariat in various regional languages.

Interpretation during Visits of Foreign Dignitaries

13. Several foreign dignitaries including Heads of States, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Ambassadors, Leaders and Members of Parliamentary delegations from different countries call on the Hon'ble Speaker every year. The services of Hindi-English interpreters are requisitioned to cover these meetings as and when such a need arises.

[Article 120 of the Constitution of India, Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and the Direction 115B (1), 115 B(2), 115 B(3) of the Directions by the Speaker.]

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IN LOK SABHA



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PREFACE

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and describes the procedure regarding Simultaneous Interpretation of the Proceedings of Lok Sabha. It is based on the constitutional provision about the languages to be used in Parliament, the Directions by the Speaker under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and the decisions arrived at, in consultation with the Leaders of Parties and Groups. 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