

WELCOME TO LEARNING HOUR ON “PARLIAMENT QUESTIONS & REPLIES”

FOR D/O SPORTS, GOI
22ND JANUARY, 2024

AGAM AGGARWAL
UNDER SECRETARY,
DOPT ISTM

COVERAGE

- Various types of parliamentary questions
- Grounds of admissibility of questions
- Action on receipt of questions
- Drafting replies to parliamentary questions

WHY ARE QUESTIONS ASKED

- ✓ Technique of parliamentary surveillance
- ✓ Questions are asked primarily
 - ✓ to elicit information,
 - ✓ to ensure accountability, and
 - ✓ for exercising a kind of legislative control over executive actions

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- Starred Questions
- Unstarred Questions
- Short Notice Questions
- Questions To A Private Member

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THREE TYPES

Points of Difference	Starred question	Unstarred Question	Short Notice Question
Nature of Reply	Oral with Supplementary questions	Written No Supplementary questions	Oral with Supplementary questions; Can be answered only when Minister concurs
Notice Period	15 days	15 days	Less than 10 days
Days	As allotted to Departments (fixed Days)	As allotted to Departments (fixed Days)	Any day of week on urgent matters of public importance only

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THREE TYPES

Points of Difference	Starred question	Unstarred Question	Short Notice Question
Maximum Number of questions asked in a day	20(LS) 15(RS)	LS - 230 + Max 25 relating to states under President's rule RS – 155 + 15 relating to states under President's rule but total should not exceed 175	One
Time	During question Hour	During question Hour	Immediately after answering of starred questions

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THREE TYPES

Points of Difference	Starred question	Unstarred Question	Short Notice Question
Special features			1. Urgent Matters of public importance 2. Consent of Minister required 3. If refused, becomes starred qn no. 1 for next qn day of the ministry

ADMISSIBILITY

- Character/conduct of any person
- Opinion on abstract legal matter
- Arguments, inferences or defamatory statements
- Available in accessible documents
- Repetition of those answered previously
- Pending before a Court/Parliamentary Committee
- Discourteous reference to foreign countries
- Information secret in nature
- Question raising larger issues of policy

ADMISSIBILITY

- A matter of day-to-day administration
- Tends to further the interest of an individual(s)
- Matters that are primarily within the jurisdiction of C E C, C&AG, and other functionaries
- Questions relating to State matters
- Questions that tend to encourage fissiparous & divisive tendencies and weaken the unity & integrity of the country

ACTION ON RECEIPT OF QUESTION

- Examine carefully
- In case of infirmity, bring to the notice of concerned Sectt.
- GOI not concerned, matter before court etc.
- within 24 hours

ACTION ON RECEIPT OF QUESTION

- If the question pertains to your section?
- If the question pertains to your section partially?
- If the question doesn't pertain to your ministry?

ACTION BY MINISTRY/DEPT.

(ON RECEIPT OF SHORT NOTICE QUESTION)

- ✓ Examine whether to answer at short notice
- ✓ If acceptable, then
 - o Draft reply
 - o Note for Supplementaries
 - o Suggest date
- ✓ If not accepted, immediately communicate to Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Sectt.

DRAFTING A REPLY

What to keep in mind?

- The format
- The structure
- The language

FORMAT

- Use A-4 size paper
- Leave left margin of 1 ½ inches (4 cm)
- Clean & legible statements / annexure
- Answer questions part-wise
- Dagger mark if the original question is in Hindi

STRUCTURE

Use parallel columns (half-margin) while submitting draft reply

- Left side for questions & right side for replies

Use up & down format for fair answers

- Upper portion for question & lower portion for replies

Priority of Starred question to be indicated at top right hand corner

LANGUAGE

- Precise and unambiguous
- Sentences to be simple
- Avoid phrases that could be taken as an assurance, unless giving assurance is the intention
- Abbreviations: Give the expanded version when used for the first time [Minimum Needs Programme (MNP)]

ENSURE

- If reply refers to information available in a document, place a copy in Parliament Library
- If original question in Hindi, Hindi version of the reply is the authentic & English, translation
- If a question is in the Printed List, it has to be answered, even though the reply may be that it would not be in public interest to give the information asked for
- Answer not to refer to answer of other House

NOTE FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

Needed in case of Starred & Short Notice Question

To intelligently anticipate material required to answer questions that could be asked

Follow departmental instructions

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NOTE FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES...

Details of the Member asking question

- Name
- Party
- Constituency

Thrust of the question

Basis for the reply

The context

The present status (action taken)

NOTE FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES...

- The problems or issues on which action still to be taken
- Reasons for the delay, if any, resource constraint, completion target date, etc
- Avoid phrases that could be treated as 'assurance'
- Details of Annexures

FOLLOW UP

- Provide the [required number of copies to the LS/RS/PIB](#)
- [Upload replies on Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha websites immediately after question hour](#)
- Upload replies on your organisation website
- Place copies of final answers in the file and also in the guard files

INACCURACY/MISTAKE IN REPLY

- Notice to be given within 1 week of reply, to Secretary General of LS/RS to make a statement, alongwith a copy of statement indicating corrections to be made
- Statement to be supported by reasons for delay
- After Statement is made, Speaker may allow supplementary questions
- If House is in Session, item to be included in the business for any day decided by Speaker
- If House is not in session, Minister may be called to make statement in next session

QUESTION TO PRIVATE MEMBER

- Private Member is a member other than member of Council of Ministers
- Question should relate to resolution or bill or any other matter relating to the house business for which Private Member is responsible
- Conditions of notice period, conditions of admissibility & procedure of drafting reply are same as that of normal questions
- No provision for short notice question by Private Member

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION

- When an answer to a qn needs elucidation
- On notice of three days by any member
- P.O. may allot half-an-hour discussion
- On three days, Mon, Wed & Friday
- Held in last 30 minutes of sitting
- Member makes a statement
- Minister gives a reply
- Not more than four members may ask clarificatory questions

ASSURANCE

- WHAT IS ASSURANCE?
- DO THEY LAPSE?
- EXAMPLES
- FULFILLMENT
- EXTENSION
- IMPLEMENTATION
- OAMS

THANK YOU