

4. COMMITTEE SECTION (PETITIONS)

4.1 Main Functions: This Section deals with the following items of work:-

- (i) provides Secretarial assistance to the Committee on Petitions, General Purposes Committee, and such other ad-hoc Committees as may be assigned to this Section from time to time which involves issuance of notices for convening their meetings, preparation of agenda papers/ memoranda/ background notes/questionnaire/minutes/draft reports, etc. for the respective Committees;
- (ii) examination of petitions received for presentation or reporting to the Rajya Sabha in accordance with the provisions contained in Chapter X of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States; and
- (iii) processing of representations received from different quarters and wherever required, forwarding the same to the Ministries/Departments and Chief Secretaries of the States concerned for necessary action.

4.2 Examination of Petitions: The work of the Section in this respect involved examination of the petitions in the context of their admissibility under the Rules after obtaining comments/factual information from the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Central Government thereon. As against twenty one petitions received during the year 2008, a total of forty two petitions were received during the year 2009. Those were examined in terms of the Rules governing their admissibility. However, none of petitions were admitted during the year, 2009.

4.3 Committee on Petitions: -Under Rule 147(1) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, nominates ten Members to the Committee which holds office until a new Committee is nominated. The Committee was re-constituted on the 24th September, 2009 with Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari as its Chairman. The same Committee continued in office at the end of the calendar year, 2009.

4.3.1 At the beginning of the year 2009, the following petitions were pending for consideration of the Committee:-

S. No.	From Whom Received	Countersigned by	Subject matter of the petition
1.	Petition jointly signed by Smt. Asha Sharma, Karol Bagh, New Delhi and Smt. Pratiba Naithani, Borivali, Mumbai.	Miss Anusuiya Uikey, Member, Rajya Sabha	Petition praying for national debate and evolving consensus on the implementation of the policy for introduction of sex education in the Schools and holding back its introduction until then.
2.	Shri Gurjit Singh, Patiala.	---	Petition praying for imposition of reasonable restrictions on the use of mobile phone.
3.	Jainacharya Shreemad Vijay Ratnasundersurisarjee, Delhi.	---	Petition praying for grant of exemption to certain categories of charitable organizations from payment of income-tax on receipt of anonymous donations.
4.	Shri Nanak Chand, President, IFCI Retirees Welfare Association, Dwarka, New Delhi and others.	---	Petition regarding benefits of pay revision and pension to the VRS optees and retirees of IFCI.

As compared to the previous year (2008) during which the Committee presented two Reports, it could conclude examination of four petitions and one ATR during the year and the reports thereon were also presented to House as per the following Table :-

Report Nos.	Subject-matter of the Report.	Date of Presentation to the House.
133 rd	Petition praying for imposition of reasonable restrictions on the use of mobile phone.	26.02.2009
134 th	Petition praying for grant of exemption to certain categories of charitable organizations from payment of income-tax on receipt of anonymous donations.	26.02.2009
135 th	Petition praying for national debate and evolving consensus on the implementation of the policy for introduction of sex education in the Schools and holding back its introduction until then.	09.06.2009
136 th	Petition regarding benefits of pay revision and pension to the VRS optees and retirees of IFCL.	03.07.2009
137 th	Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in its Hundred and Thirtieth Report on the petition praying for enhancement of pension to veteran and renowned artists living in indigent condition.	04.08.2009

Copies of the Reports had been sent to the respective petitioners for their information. These Reports were also forwarded to the concerned Ministries for Action Taken Replies thereon.

4.3.2 Action Taken Replies: The Committee examined four ATRs i.e., on Hundred and Twenty-ninth, Hundred and Thirtieth, Hundred and Thirty-first and Hundred and Thirty-second Reports respectively, during the year 2009 and had closed examination of the ATR on its Hundred and Twenty-ninth Report. The Committee presented its Hundred and Thirty-seventh Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in its Hundred and Thirtieth Report on the petition praying for financial assistance to veteran and renowned artists living in indigent condition. Examination of ATR on Hundred and Thirty-first Report could not be completed by it. ATRs on Hundred and Thirty-second, Hundred and Thirty-third, Hundred and Thirty-fourth and Hundred and Thirty-fifth Reports are yet to be considered by the Committee.

4.4. Meetings and Study visits of the Committee on Petitions: - Compared to eighteen meetings held last year, the Committee held a total number of thirteen sittings during the year 2009. The details of the meeting, agenda, time taken, etc. are given below:-

S. No.	Date of Meeting	Time Devoted Hrs-Mts.	Main Agenda
1.	5.1.2009	1.15	oral evidence of the Secretaries, Department of School Education and Literacy and Department of Higher Education (M/o HRD), Department of Telecommunications (M/o Communications and IT) and Department of Road Transport and Highways on the petition praying for imposition of reasonable restrictions on the use on mobile phone.
2.	22.1.2009	1.30	oral evidence of:- (i) Special Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Secretary, Department of Road Transport and Highways on the petition praying for imposition of reasonable restrictions on the use of mobile phone; and (ii) Secretary, Department of Revenue (M/o Finance) on the petition praying for grant of exemption to certain categories of charitable organizations from payment of income-tax on receipt of anonymous donations.

3.	30.1.2009	0.30	held several discussions on following petitions:-(i)Petition praying for national debate and evolving consensus on the implementation of the policy for introduction of sex education in the School; (ii) petition praying of imposition of certain reasonable restrictions on the use of mobile phones (iii) petition praying for grant of exemption to certain categories of charitable organization from payment of income tax on receipt of anonymous donations (iv) petition regarding benefits of pay revision and pension to the VRS optees and retirees of IFCI
4.	25.2.2009	0.35	considered and adopted its Hundred and Thirty-third Report on the petition praying of imposition of certain reasonable restrictions on the use of mobile phones and Hundred and Thirty-fourth Report on the petition praying for grant of exemption to certain categories of charitable organization from payment of income tax on receipt of anonymous donations.
5.	17.3.2009	0.35	considered and adopted its draft Hundred and Thirty-fifth Report on the petition praying for national debate and evolving a consensus on the implementation of the policy for introduction of sex education in the schools across the country and holding back its introduction until then.
6.	24.3.2009	0.40	considered the following Action Taken Reports (ATRs):- (i)Interim ATR on the Hundred and thirtieth Report of the Committee on the petition praying enhancement of pension to veteran and renowned artists living in indigent condition and (ii) ATR on the Hundred and Thirty-first Report on the petition praying for integration and empowerment of leprosy affected persons (LAPs).
7.	19.6.2009	1.00	(i) considered and adopted draft Hundred Thirty- sixth Report on the petition regarding benefits of pay revision and pension to the VRS optees and retirees of IFCI; and (ii) oral evidence of the Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Member, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways on recommendations of the Committee contained in its Hundred and Thirtieth Report on the petition paying for enhancement of pension to veteran and renowned artists living in indigent conditions
8.	3.8.2009	0.30	considered and adopted draft Hundred and Thirty- seventh Report on Action Taken by Government on the observations/recommendations contained in its Hundred and Thirtieth Report on the petition praying for enhancement of pension to veteran and renowned artists living in indigent condition.
9.	5.10.2009	0.40	Introductory meeting of reconstituted Committee to discuss future programme.
10.	21.10.2009	1.35	oral evidence of Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare alongwith other Secretaries to the Govt. of India in the concerned Ministries/Departments on the ATR on Hundred and Thirty-first Report of the Committee and considered Memoranda Nos. 1 to 6 of 2009 related to ATRs on the Hundred and Thirty-first Report.
11.	28.10.2009	1.30	oral evidence of Secretaries, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Deptt. of Food & Public Distribution on the ATR on Hundred and Thirty-first Report of the Committee and considered Memoranda No. 1 and 6 of 2009 related to ATRs on Hundred and Thirty-first Report..
12.	16.11.2009	1.00	oral evidence of Secretaries of the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare and Social Justice and Empowerment on the ATR on Hundred and Thirty-first Report of the Committee and considered Memorandum No. 2 of 2009 thereon.
13.	15.12.2009	1.20	oral evidence of Secretaries of Deptts. of School Education & Literacy and Higher Education on the ATR on Hundred and Thirty-first Report of the Committee and considered Memorandum No.7 thereon.

4.4.1 During the year 2009, no study visit was undertaken by the Committee.

4.4.2 Besides attending to the work connected with the meetings of the Committee on Petitions, the Section also handled all correspondence with the Ministries/Departments concerned on various aspects connected with the implementation of the recommendations/observations of the Committee as contained in its Reports presented to the House from time to time.

4.5. General Purposes Committee: - From 1st July 2000 onwards the provisions relating to General Purposes Committee (GPC) find place in Chapter XXIII of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States. In accordance with Rule 279(2), the Committee holds office until a new Committee is constituted. The functions of the Committee are to consider and advise on such matters concerning the affairs of the House as may be referred to it by the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha from time to time. No fixed number has been laid down for its membership and the Deputy Chairman, Members of the Panel of Vice-Chairmen, Chairmen of all Standing Parliamentary Committees of Rajya Sabha, Leaders of recognized Parties/Groups in the House are nominated to this Committee. The Committee with thirty-four Members was reconstituted on the 8th October, 2009. Hon'ble Chairman nominated a Member to fill the vacancy caused due to death of a Member in 2009. All the new Members of the Committee were informed about their nominations through letters individually addressed to them.

4.5.1 Meetings of General Purposes Committee:- The Committee held one sitting and considered a Memorandum during the year 2009, the detail of the which are given below:-

S. No.	Date of Meeting	Time Devoted Hrs-Mts.	Main Agenda
1.	27.7.2009	1.10	Memorandum No.1 of 2009 on improvement in the output of Question Hour.

4.6. Preparation of Paragraphs for inclusion in the Journal of Parliamentary Information: Paragraphs for inclusion in the Journal of Parliamentary Information containing information about the work transacted by the two Committees, namely, the Committee on Petitions and the General Purposes Committee were prepared and sent from time to time to the Research & Library Section for incorporation in the Journal being issued quarterly.

4.7. Representations received from various individuals/organizations: As against one hundred twenty five in the last year, two hundred thirteen representations on various subjects addressed to the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha/Chairman, Committee on Petitions/Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha, were received from different quarters during the year 2009. All such representations were examined in the Section and in appropriate cases copies thereof were sent to the concerned Ministries/Departments and concerned State Governments for necessary Action.

4.8. Settlement of Refreshment Bills: Seventy-three bills received from the Assistant Commercial Officer (Catering), Northern Railway, Tea Board, Coffee Board, Parliament House Complex in respect of refreshment served in the meetings of the Committees were processed and sent for payment to the Establishment (Accounts) and Budget Section.

4.9. Budgetary Allocation: This Section was allocated a sum of Rs. 60,000/- in the Budgetary grant for the Financial Year 2009-2010 under the Head "Other Administrative Expenses (02 00 20)" out of which Rs. 20,947 was utilized for settlement of Bills in respect of refreshments served in the meetings of the Committees.

4.10. Status of Computerization: This Section has been provided with Five Pentium based P.Cs, which were extensively used for disposing of various items of work assigned to the Section. All computers have been linked with Local Area Network and internet facilities. The Section is regularly feeding and updating the data in the Committee Software and uploaded Reports to the

Rajya Sabha Website. E-mail and SMS facilities were used to inform the Members about the meetings of the Committee.

4.11. Training: During the year 2009, Shri Yogamber Singh Nayal, Committee Assistant had attended training programmes on "Financial Management" at iCISA, Noida organized by the Training Unit, Rajya Sabha Secretariat and "Record Management and Right to Information" organized by ISTM. Shri Surendra Singh, Sr. Clerk was imparted in-house training on "Parliamentary Practice and Procedure".

4.12. Inspection of the Section during the year: The Annual Office Inspection of the Section for the year 2009 was conducted on 11th February, 2009 by Shri S. Jason, Joint Director.

4.13. Goals and objectives of the Section achieved during the year: The details of the activities undertaken by the Section in the year 2009 have been enumerated above. Similarly, a quarterly statements on the petitions pending before the Committee was compiled and submitted for perusal/information of the Chairman, Committee on Petitions. In the context of the goals of this Section, an Action Plan was also prepared and acted upon. These goals were, to a large extent, achieved with success.