COMPUTERISATION IN RAJYA SABHA:

AN OVERVIEW

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते।

(भगवद् गीता, ४/३८)

Verily, there is no purifier in this
world like knowledge.

(Bhagavad Gita, 4/38)

RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
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C O N T E N T S

PREFACE

Advent of information and communication technologies has heralded an unparalleled revolutionary epoch marked by unprecedented connectivity, drastic reduction in distances and faster transmission of information. Convergence of technologies for electronic storage, retrieval, spread and use of information and audio visual images has opened new frontiers for quick and efficient disposal of work without much use of paper.

'Computerisation in Rajya Sabha — An Overview' is an attempt to describe the adoption and widespread use of computers and internet in the Rajya Sabha for accelerating its activities and providing an interface to the public and Parliament. The steady improvements in work output and maintenance of electronic databases, owe a lot to computerisation of Rajya Sabha, which is being continuously taken forward. The networking has taken the Parliament to the door-steps of the world at the click of a mouse and, at the same time, taken Parliament and parliamentary activities closer to people. The availability of information on the portals of Parliament and its easy access has invested participatory democracy with a new meaning, dimension and content.

The booklet seeks to highlight the use of information and communication technologies in parliamentary work in order to provide better service. I hope the reader will find the booklet useful and informative.

New Delhi;
April, 2012

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Secretary-General
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COMPUTERISATION IN RAJYA SABHA : AN OVERVIEW

I. Introduction

Technology remains at the heart of human progress. Mankind has evolved from one age of technology to another with each age opening new vistas of communication, which has contributed spectacularly to shrinking of distances and spreading of the ideas of democracy, freedom and liberty of people. While the industrial age commencing with the invention of new means of production diminished distance and brought people and societies across the globe closer, the cost of doing so remained high. Evolution of what is called 'the network age' with the introduction of computers and internet brought about a paradigm shift in technology application for "unprecedented networking and knowledge opportunities" at a cost which is incredibly small and hitherto not even dreamt of. It is appropriately said that communication revolution driven by information technology is attempting to make the 'impossible of yesterday' the 'possible of today'. As a renowned scholar[1] has stated:

> In the last hundred years, we see the rapidly accelerating advent of a technology so powerful, novel, widespread, and influential that we may indeed call it the Second Industrial revolution.

He goes on to say,

> The progress has been truly amazing. In only about forty years, electronic communications and news media have become common place and indispensable; computers have proliferated, become increasingly fast, powerful, small and cheap, so that now there is scarcely a human activity in which they are not to be found.

In fact, Internet has been described as the first metaphysical invention in human civilisation, which has the potential to transform just about everything by bringing people closer. Tim Berners Lee, its inventor, has written[2],

> .... the web is more a social creation than a technical one... I designed it for social effect - to help people work together - and not as a technical toy.

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[1] 'The Anatomy of Computing', John Halton in *The Information Technology Revolution,* ed. Tom Forester, MIT Press, 1985.
[2] *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web,* Tim Berners-Lee & Mark Fischetti, Paw Prints, 2008.

Internet along with its various social networking sites has become the harbinger of political and social transformation all over the world in the recent years. Professor Arno Penzias, Noble Laureate of 1978 in physics, referring to the computer very insightfully observed,

> "… for the first time this machine in its network is empowering the poor as no other human inventions did in the last five millennia".

II. Information Technology and Democratisation

(1) As in other fields of human endeavour, rapid progress in information technology and communication networks have influenced the functioning of political establishments and institutions. Its use in furthering and strengthening democratic ideals can hardly be over-emphasized. The new information and communication technologies have thrown up several new possibilities for forging instant linkages between the electorate and their representatives thus making democracy more effective. It is widely believed, there is a strong correlation between interconnectivity and democratisation, suggesting that freedom is promoted when the benefits of information technology are maximized in the working of the democratic institutions. In the House of Commons, as part of the modernisation programme, it has been suggested that new technologies can help widen participation. A Report[3] by the Information Committee had recommended that Parliament should make more use of information and communication technologies to increase its accessibility and transparency. It stated that there was concern amongst the public and the members that the House appeared remote and that it did not respond as well as it should to the public. Normally, public perception about Parliament is formed from a distance, through correspondence and reports of its proceedings. There is a noticeable disenchantment amongst the people towards parliamentary institutions which political scientists have attributed mainly to 'a crisis of political communication'. The Report suggested that development in Information Communication Technology (ICT) could be used to increase public awareness of the work of Parliament and MPs, in order to promote greater parliamentary accountability and enhance its reputation amongst the general public.

(2) It has also been argued that despite the explosion of communication, there is no noticeable improvement in the democratic content of political institutions. Deepening of democratic ideals would depend on how and for what purposes technology is put to use and the ability of the masses to access them. Noted scholar, Anthony G. Wilhelm[4] has noted,

> There is often an appearance of progress; yet increased computer processor speed and greater telecommunications bandwidth do not

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[3] *Digital Technology: Working for Parliament and the Public,* House of Commons, Information Committee, Great Britain, 2002.
[4] Democracy in the Digital Age: Changes to Political Life in Cyberspace, Anthony G. Wilhelm, Routledge, New York, London, 2000.

automatically advance the human condition. As long as these tools are universally available and appropriately used to improve 'free participation in democratic deliberation', then they will constitute a positive advance.

(3) In fact, it is now widely accepted that information flow within the Government, between citizens and Government, and among citizens and civil society is crucial for building a successful democratic society. Various kinds of conventional media such as newspapers, radio and TV have been used for decades to disseminate information about political processes and educate public opinion. However, these were all linear forms of communication. With rapid development of new information and communication technologies, new opportunities have become available to conduct democratic functions in innovative ways. Internet has come of age and digital media has become an inherent part of society. Democratic institutions representing peoples' hopes and aspirations cannot remain unaffected by the revolutionary changes brought about by the enormous advances in the information and communication technologies. In the present day complex and interdependent global environment, facing concerns of environmental, economic and social upheavals, a parliamentarian's role has undergone a sea-change. Innovative strategies are called for in the fields of legislation and governance and also to engage the public in political processes.

(4) Parliaments like other institutions have been increasingly making use of latest information technology methods to reach out to the people at large. Being the central institution for debate, discussion and above all for policy formulation and scrutiny of executive functioning, every innovation within these representative bodies is an attempt to further the cause of democracy. It is worthwhile to note that rapid strides in communication and information technology and convergence of various such disciplines have opened up newer vistas of information-sharing. It has made access to various kinds of data easier. Members of Parliament in order to discharge their responsibilities effectively need to have objective up-to-date and authentic information. At the same time, a proper exchange of information between the Government and the Members of Parliament and *vice-versa* is also vital for democracy. This may be better facilitated by harnessing these new technologies for sharing and exchange of information between the executive and the legislature. It would also ensure more transparency, better effectiveness and more civil society engagement in the process of governance.

III. Use of Information Technology in the Upper House (Rajya Sabha) of the Parliament of India

(1) The Indian Parliament representing more than a billion people has taken rapid strides in embracing various tools of ICT. India, the largest democracy in the world, faces enormous challenges of development and

governance. Efforts have, therefore, been made to make effective use of such technologies to bring government closer to the people thereby enabling citizens to interact with multiple agencies, departments and the elected representatives and further deepening democracy in the country. The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) has been launched. It takes a holistic view of e-governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a collective vision, a shared objective. The ultimate aim is to bring public services closer home to citizens as articulated in the Vision Statement of NeGP: "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets, and ensure efficiency, transparency, and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realise the basic needs of the common man".

(2) The Upper House of the Parliament, the Rajya Sabha has made concerted efforts to adopt and internalize these new technological tools in order to take Parliament closer to the people. The Council of States has always been in the forefront in developing and implementing the latest ICT tools for processing, storage and dissemination of information to Members of Parliament, media and the general public. Since the initial days, the basic objective has been to promote systematic growth and expansion of computerisation in the functioning of the Rajya Sabha and its Secretariat to meet the challenges of the future. A lot has been achieved since the modest beginning almost two decades back. After building up adequate IT infrastructure both in terms of hardware and software, a need was felt that now to move further ahead, provide push for a coordinated approach, keep pace with the fast growing technological innovations and demand for implementing those in the functioning of the Rajya Sabha and its Secretariat and to ensure systematic overall progress, the tool of developing a pragmatic and well defined Information Technology Plans has been put in place. The First IT Plan was formulated for the years 2007-09 and at present the Second IT Plan for the years 2010-12 is being actively implemented. The IT Plan aims at the systematic growth and expansion of computerisation which can meet the challenges of the future. The basic objectives of the computerisation process in the Rajya Sabha are (i) to set up an institutional framework to implement and monitor the computerisation process; (ii) to use e-Governance tools to upgrade the standard and quality of working environment and also to provide Member-oriented, efficient and effective services; (iii) to make the functioning of Rajya Sabha and its various activities efficient, transparent and accessible; (iv) to bring the Upper Chamber of Parliament closer to the people at large through exchange of information and services easily, quickly, efficiently and inexpensively; (v) to provide adequate ICT infrastructure and IT literacy in the Rajya Sabha and its Secretariat; and (vi) to reduce the use of paper in this organisation. To achieve these objectives, the action items have

been divided into following broad categories: (a) software development, their implementation and maintenance; (b) information dissemination through the internet medium; (c) enhancement of content and quality of the websites of the Rajya Sabha; (d) redesigning of the intranet site of Rajya Sabha Secretariat; (e) publishing of public domain information under RTI on the websites of Rajya Sabha; (f) digitization of public domain information; (g) upgradation of networking infrastructure; (h) ensuring information security; and (i) procurement of necessary hardware.

IV. The Initial Beginning

The idea of introducing automation services in Indian Parliament was conceived way back in 1982 and a computer based information retrieval system called PARLIS (Parliament Library and Information System) was set up in 1985 with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC). PARLIS is linked with the NIC's satellite based network called NICNET which is linked with the capitals of all the States of India and also with all district headquarters enabling faster exchange of information with State legislatures and district headquarters through e-mail. In the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, computers were introduced for the first time in 1987 in the Pay & Accounts Office followed by a few other sections. In 1993 the computerisation efforts within the Secretariat were placed under the Training Unit and in 1997 a separate Computer Cell was set up to deal with various issues arising out of the adoption of new information and communication technologies for the use of Members of Parliament and its officers.

V. Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha

(1) The issue of providing computers to the Members of Rajya Sabha to facilitate their parliamentary work, was first considered by the General Purposes Committee of Rajya Sabha (GPC) at its meeting held on 14 February, 1995. Thereafter, notebook/laptop computers were procured in that very year for supply to Members on a returnable basis. For this purpose, Provision of Computers to Members of Parliament — Rules and Procedures, 1995 were framed. However, with the supply of notebook computers, requests from Members for other equipments and services started pouring in. In order to have an institutional arrangement for proper consideration of such matters, the GPC at its meeting held on 20 February, 1997 recommended that a committee be constituted to go into all aspects relating to supply, etc. of computers to Members of Rajya Sabha and authorized the Chairman, Rajya Sabha to nominate Members to such a Committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha. Accordingly, the Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members

of Rajya Sabha[5] was constituted by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 18 March, 1997. This Committee consists of eight members including Deputy Chairman, nominated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha. The Committee has been regularly meeting to review the progress towards computerisation and initiating various IT initiatives in the functioning of Rajya Sabha. The Committee (i) decides parameters with regard to application of information technology in the functioning of Rajya Sabha; (ii) decides norms for provision of computer hardware and software to be made available to Members from time to time along with suitable training to enable Members for proficient use of IT tools; and (iii) takes steps to ensure increasing use of electronic mode of information dissemination in the Rajya Sabha.

(2) To make available various tools of information technology to the Members of Rajya Sabha, this Committee revised the 1995 Rules and formulated the "Provision of Computer Equipment (Members and Officers) Rules, 2008" (*Annexure I*) with the approval of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, which came into force on 1st April 2008. The Committee has attempted to streamline the procedure regulating the purchase of computer equipment by the Members.

(3) As per the revised rules, there is a provision regarding "Scheme of Financial Entitlement of Members of Rajya Sabha for Computer Equipment". As per the scheme, Members can purchase computer equipments (desktop and laptop computers, E-reader devices, Pen drives, printers, scanners, UPS, handheld communicator, data internet cards, MS Office Suite, Language and Speech recognition software, monitor and external hard drive) using their financial entitlement. The financial entitlement of Members with a term of more than three years is Rs. 2,00,000/-. Members having a term of three yeras or less have a financial entitlement of Rs. 1,50,000/-. Out of this entitlement, Rs. 50,000/- is to facilitate purchase of the approved E-reader compatible devices, which is expected to reduce their dependency on paper copies of parliamentary documents. Procurement of one such device by Members is mandatory and the cost of the device is kept aside from the total allocated amount of each Member. Internet and e-mail facilities are provided to Members by the NIC free of charge. Members can also avail broadband facility of MTNL/BSNL by choosing to forego 10,000 of their telephone calls out of 1,50,000 free calls for each broadband connection. Similarly, Members can also avail of 3G facility and Blackberry

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[5] The Committee when it was constituted was named as "Committee on Provision of Computers to Members of Rajya Sabha". However, when the amended Rules "The Provision of Computer Equipment (Members of Rajya Sabha and Officers) Rules, 2008 were framed, the word "Computers" was modified to "Computer Equipment" making the name of the Committee as "Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha".

services through packages customized for them. The adequacy of the financial entitlement is reviewed by the Committee annually. Secretarial support to the Committee is provided by the IT Sections (Hardware and Software) and Technical support is provided by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and more specifically by a Standing Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) comprising officers of the Secretariat and NIC.

VI. Rajya Sabha on the World Wide Web

(1) Along with provision of computers to Members, the imperative need for the adoption of latest IT tools has been to reach out to the people, both within the country as well as beyond its boundaries. In an effort to increase information availability to Members and also to public, the Rajya Sabha website was augmented in 1999. To further promote it, the web page has also been made available in Hindi from March 2001 onwards. Prior to this, information regarding Rajya Sabha was made available on the Parliament Home Page inaugurated in 1996. Now, with further computerisation of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat and installation and operation of various client server software applications, electronic databases have been developed with web-enabled outputs and this information is made available on the English and Hindi websites of Rajya Sabha, namely *http:// www.rajyasabha.nic.in* and *http://www.rajyasabhahindi.nic.in* pertaining exclusively to information relating to Rajya Sabha. Both the internet sites are user-friendly and structured for use by Members of Parliament, Ministries and the general public. The Rajya Sabha websites have been designed and developed with the technical support of the NIC, Ministry of Information Technology (Government of India). The Rajya Sabha websites, have contributed significantly to bring the functioning of Rajya Sabha and its Members closer to the ordinary citizens of the country and to put as much information as possible in the public domain. There is proactive disclosure of information in both English and Hindi regarding every aspect of the Upper House.

Redesigning the Websites

(2) An exercise was undertaken to comprehensively redesign the websites to make them more user-friendly and easily navigable as well as to use the latest website development technologies, in order to make them compliant with the Guidelines for Indian Government websites formulated by NIC and circulated by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The revamped website were launched in July 2009 by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha. These websites are exclusively dedicated to the Rajya Sabha and include a wealth of information on the business listed and transacted in the House, record of debates held on the floor of the House,

Parliament Questions and their Answers, status of Legislation, information relating to various Committees of the House, Who's Who of Members along with their contact details and email addresses, Rules of Procedure of the Rajya Sabha, Secretariat related information, etc. Various parliamentary papers such as Papers to be laid on the Table of the House, Parliamentary Bulletins, Daily Synopsis of Debates, etc. are also placed on the website. All information is published both in English and Hindi. Thus, Rajya Sabha websites not only cater to the people living in large cities knowing English but millions of our people both in urban and rural areas who know Hindi only. A comprehensive Website Quality Manual for Rajya Sabha websites which delineates the responsibilities of various sections and officers of the Secretariat regarding updating, monitoring and archiving of various data/items placed on the websites has been prepared.

Usage of Database Applications

(3) An important feature of the Rajya Sabha website is that the work of each section/branch of the Secretariat has been computerised. The computerised applications have been developed through which the data is collected on the central server, which is linked to the internet. All the manual record-keeping of the data/registers has been replaced with the computer-based applications and databases. For this, new rules and new procedures have been developed which support the IT based systems. All the computers in the Secretariat are linked through high speed local area network (LAN), for fast information transfer. All the users have been provided e-mail accounts and Internet browsing facility. A dedicated team of IT professionals of the National Informatics Center (Government of India), provides and manages the IT, and communication resources and services. Some of the major database applications are:

(i) **Legislative Information & Bills Database:** A comprehensive database application system has been developed to monitor the progress of various legislative proposals (Bills) introduced in either House of the Parliament. A web interface provides query on a number of parameters. Complete text of the Bills at various stages has been made available on the Website. It also gives the progress and status of each Bill.

(ii) **Parliament Questions Database:** Parliament Questions are the important instruments for raising matters of public importance in the House by Members of Parliament and get the reply/action taken from the Government. A database has been developed to store all the Parliament Questions, with the answers and a Query System has been built. Such databases are the performance-measuring instrument for the Members of Parliament. The public can know from the internet how many questions/issues have been raised by their representatives in the House.

(iii) Parliament Questions and Answers Publishing System: It is another innovative tool to reduce the time in making available Parliament Questions and Answers on the Website. This further streamlines the procedure of electronic submission of the replies to the Parliament Questions by the Ministries. Rajya Sabha Secretariat took a lead in developing a web portal *(https://pqars.nic.in),* which is accessible to all the Ministries/Departments for publishing the replies to Parliament Questions listed against their names. This has effectively dealt with the problem of delays in making available text of the Parliament Questions and Answers on the website of the Rajya Sabha. As a result, most of the replies get published on the website the same day on which they are answered in the Rajya Sabha. It has changed the earlier process of sending text of Question - Answer to the Parliament through e-mail and further processing of the received text by the Parliament Secretariat and publishing it on the website. Thus the whole process has been re-engineered, reducing time and cost.

(iv) Government Assurance Database: 'Government Assurances' is the unique feature of the Indian Parliament. If a Minister is not able to convincingly give the complete reply to a Question asked by a Member, and promises to look into the matter later, it is considered as an assurance given by the Government. A Parliamentary Committee monitors all such assurances. A computerised application maintains the database of the assurances and these are published on the Internet with a search facility.

(v) Special Mentions MIS: The Rajya Sabha website also publishes the special mentions made in the House by the Members of the Parliament. Special Mention is a procedure for raising matters of public importance in the House. A Query System provides the search facility into the Special Mention database.

(vi) Parliamentary Committees Information: The website gives the information about the parliamentary committees, their membership details, rules governing their functioning and procedures, meeting schedules, engagements and the reports (with text) made by the Committees. Introduction and actual customization of this software for the various committees of the Rajya Sabha was a difficult task. This was more so as issues dealt with by the various committee sections were vastly different from each other. For example, the work of Committee on Papers Laid on the Table (COPLOT) is quite different from what is handled in the Committee of Privileges. Notwithstanding these inherent differences, standardization in terms of systems design and outputs were attempted in the Committee Sections. In order to arrive at

this, common median intervention at various levels were made and several series of workshops with the actual users of the committees' software were undertaken. All these efforts have proved successful in terms of standardizing and systematizing the outputs and also in developing a database of essential committee related information.

(vii) **The Members' Page and Consolidated Who's Who:** Another major initiative in computerisation has been the Who's Who software. Who's Who is a biennial publication of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat giving personal details of the Members of Rajya Sabha, their professional achievements and other relevant information. This work was used to be done manually and the compilation of the bio-data published biennially. With the development of the Who's Who software, the bio-data of the Members of Rajya Sabha are readily made available on the web page and changes and updations are promptly reflected therein. The sections handling various aspects of the bio-data provide information to the respective fields in the client server software for data inputting which is then further put on the web. The Table Office has been provided access to the particular fields in the client-server applications relating to party affiliation, local and permanent addresses, etc. and other information relating to the members' bio-data is handled by the LARRDIS. The combined information is then made available on the intranet for use in the Secretariat and on the internet for public at large. The software has made it possible to get various outputs like alphabetical list of members, tenure of the Members, their e-mail addresses and residential addresses. To further enhance and sharpen the outputs, a Who's Who search form has also been developed. The fields worked out for classifying the members relate to their party affiliations, membership, age, profession, their educational qualifications, etc. This is likely to enable the public to understand better the composition of the Rajya Sabha.

(viii) Apart from the consolidated Who's Who, the Members option on the Rajya Sabha Home Page gives a plethora of up-to-date information about sitting as well as former Members. Information regarding Members is also made available through the 'Members' Home Page' which provides *inter alia* links to their detailed bio-data, the questions asked by them on the floor of the House, answers given by the Government to such questions in each session, their membership of different committees, etc. as also information regarding the allocation of funds and its utilisation under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS).

(4) The details about the officers and sections of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat with their respective responsibilities and e-mail addresses are also available on the web page for direct sharing of information, quicker contact and effective response. The pamphlet on redesigned Rajya Sabha website and a summary of Parliamentary information available on the website are placed at *Annexure II*. Most of the published documents, including Committee Reports, are made available on the Rajya Sabha website. Greater availability of parliamentary documents in the public domain ensures transparency and openness in the democratic process. List of publications that are electronically available on the website is placed at *Annexure III*. Web accessibility features in the English and Hindi websites of Rajya Sabha have been incorporated to enable the visually challenged to use the websites.

Live webcast of proceedings

(5) The webcast of the Live Proceedings of Rajya Sabha was inaugurated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat on 11th December, 2003. During the session period, there is live webcast of the proceedings of the House. The Rajya Sabha became one of the first legislative institutions in the world to introduce live webcasting of its proceedings.

Use of e-mail to provide information to Members

(6) Another significant area in making use of the information technology has been the wider use of e-mail facility. Each Member of the Rajya Sabha has been provided with an e-mail address and parliamentary information is regularly mailed to him or her on that particular address. In fact, with a view to making information available to Members as quickly as possible, the Secretariat sends the daily List of Business and Parliamentary Bulletins Part I and Part II, through e-mail to Members of the Rajya Sabha, both in English and Hindi. This is done in addition to the normal distribution of printed material.

Photo gallery

(7) Archival photos of Parliament House with important information are put in the photo album giving the viewer a sense of history. The statues, busts and paintings of noted freedom fighters, which adorn the Parliament House and its precincts, have been made available through these new technologies. The corridors of Parliament House boast several panels of mural paintings by noted artists. These have been incorporated in the Rajya Sabha Webpage in the form of a Photo Gallery. Virtual visit to Parliament House at the click of a mouse has thus become more informative.

(8) Further, to use the Internet for research purposes and access information, the Rajya Sabha Webpage provides links to several important search engines. Other useful links on the Rajya Sabha Webpage allow users to get access to the websites of different newspapers, Election Commission of India, States and Union Territories, State Legislatures, Parliaments of other countries, International Parliamentary Union and other such bodies.

Web Ratna Award

(9) The design, quality, content and user-friendliness of the website has merited attention and admiration from several quarters. The Rajya Sabha website was awarded 'Gold Icon' under the category 'Comprehensive Web Presence-Ministry/Department' of the Web Ratna Awards 2009, instituted by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, for promoting noteworthy e-governance initiatives in India. The Award was presented to the Secretariat by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology on 19 April 2010. It has been acclaimed for being user-friendly, citizen centric and responsive in its web based information and service delivery initiatives.

VII. Use of Information Technology in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat & Intranet Applications

(1) The computerization of Rajya Sabha Secretariat has been an on-going process. As part of this exercise, automation in the Secretariat which began in 1987 has been further improved upon. A Computer Cell was set up in 1997 by the Secretariat to deal with various issues arising out of adoption of new information and communication technologies for the Members of Parliament and its officers. In a gradual manner, all sections have been provided with as many computers as are necessary and all have been put on LAN. Internet access has also been provided on requirement basis. It has ensured familiarity of the staff with electronic data maintenance, and most significantly it prepared them for the next level of computerisation, *i.e.,* the client server applications. The client server applications have been designed to address the needs of the respective sections while ensuring updation of the data at the section level. The data outputs have been structured and filtered and made accessible on the intranet for further use by other sections of the Secretariat. Thus, the routinely generated data which was earlier manually handled in the section is now made available through the client server applications on the intranet by using applications software programmes (ASPs). Once the data inputting and checking is complete, the final information is made available on the internet for the consumption of the public at large. In order to streamline the processes a conscious decision was taken at the very outset that in every application,

manual data maintenance would be replaced by electronic database and accountability for the data generated was also fixed. Whenever any data is flowing from one section to another, the originating section is required to send the data in electronic form so that the section disseminating it would not have to bear more than its normal share of work. The data thus generated has been found to be largely systematized and more or less error free.

(2) The introduction and actual operation of these client server software applications in the Secretariat was not without challenges. Interventions at various levels were needed, meaningful improvements were suggested and incorporated as per requirement. With growing familiarity, the staff have also gained expertise and confidence for working in the new environment, thereby improving the overall efficiency and saving on time and effort. On the whole, the adoption of these software applications has helped save labour and enabled the staff to transact business with speed and accuracy. For example computerisation of the Parliamentary Reporting Service has been a major step. The parliamentary reporters who transcribe the verbatim proceedings of Rajya Sabha are all provided with computers and multilingual software named Indian Standard Font Code (ISFOC) Script Manager to enable them to transcribe the uncorrected debates more neatly, precisely and quickly. Another software known as Parliamentary Reporters Information Systems (PRISM) provides the facility for file creation, storage and merging the texts of the debates transcribed by the reporters separately to produce the complete debate.

(3) E-filing system is being used in the Secretariat to speed up processing of files pertaining to various amenities made available to the Members. A File Tracking System (DMIS) for electronic monitoring of receipts and files was introduced in selected sections of the Secretariat. In all 64 dedicated software applications are in use in the Rajya Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The webpage featuring all these applications from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat intranet site is placed at *Annexure IV*. The Secretariat has already stopped circulation of hard copies of majority of the papers/ documents concerning employees and these are now posted digitally and are available on the intranet of the Secretariat. Office orders, circulars and notifications issued from time to time by the Secretariat are available on the intranet for ready reference of the staff. All the application forms for use of the staff, namely, for loans, leave, etc., are on the intranet which can be downloaded as per requirement. Personnel Administration and Management Software (PAMS software) was enhanced by developing a new application "Employees Portal" through which employees could see their basic details, pay slips, GPF accounts, etc.

(4) Apart from these, some of the other significant ICT initiatives taken in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat are:

- Machine Assisted Translation System - Rajya Sabha (MANTRA)
- Member's Login application
- SMS Integration with various applications
- Utility to obtain details regarding Members through SMS
- Customized Application for Tablet Devices

Some of these features are described below:

Development of Machine Assisted Translation System (MANTRA): In the year 2001, a team of Officers of the Secretariat visited the European Union Parliament and saw the facility of translation amongst different European languages. Since business in the Rajya Sabha is also conducted in at least two different languages, mainly English and Hindi, it was decided to develop a tool to facilitate machine translation from English to Hindi of four documents produced by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat on a daily basis, namely, Papers Laid on the Table (PLOT), List of Business (LOB), Parliamentary Bulletin Part-I, and Parliamentary Bulletin Part-II. MANTRA stands for MAchiNe assisted TRAnslation for the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC). It was launched by the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 29 August 2007. Earlier, the same work had to be done manually by a team of translators, consuming a lot of time and manpower. This system averages one page of translation in one minute with a high quality of translation and about 90% accuracy in the defined domains. The MANTRA-Rajya Sabha system works on the Rajya Sabha Secretariat's Intranet where the workflow has been integrated to provide a very user-friendly environment. MANTRA, in its second phase now, seeks to develop a more complex translation tool for Synopsis of Debates. This being a free-flowing text with few repetitions is a greater challenge but it will add to speedy disposal of work.

Members Login (https://mprs.nic.in): This is an innovative idea of Rajya Sabha Secretariat, which provides a two-way communication channel between the Hon'ble Members of Rajya Sabha (MPs) and the Rajya Sabha Secretariat for better e-communication and delivery of various services. In order to disseminate the information to the Members of Parliament, which is confidential and/or pertains to an individual Member, the Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, had desired that, some mechanism should be evolved so that information could be sent to a particular Member electronically. Member's Login application is a step forward in that direction, which also helps reduction in the use of paper for disseminating the information to the

Member of Parliament by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Information under following head is available in the Member's login:

1. Inbox
2. Submit Request
3. Pay Slip
4. Payments details
5. Bulletin Part-II
6. Verbatim Debates (text format)
7. Email Addresses of Members
8. Addresses of Members (Label Printing on envelope)
9. Committee Meetings Schedule

Similarly, through this application, Members are also able to send various requests and communications to the Secretariat.

SMS Integration: This Application, enables users to send important messages, alerts to the Members/Officers regarding Committee Meetings, summoning of House, any important event etc., using the NIC SMS gateway. A web based SMS utility has been developed for sending SMSs to the various users.

Utility to obtain details regarding Members through SMS: Details regarding Members of Rajya Sabha, such as their addresses and contact numbers are available on the Rajya Sabha website. However, to assist Members, media and general public, a SMS utility has been developed through which these details can be accessed by sending an SMS query at a designated number (9212357123).

Customised Application for Tablet Devices: The Rajya Sabha provided e-Reader devices to Members to reduce their dependency on paper copies of Parliamentary documents. To facilitate Members to access the daily parliamentary papers, such as List of Business, Papers Laid on the Table of the House, latest Parliamentary Bulletins, Questions Lists, etc., on their devices, access software applications have been developed and installed on the tablet devices of the Members, which are 3G/wi-fi enabled. These web based applications (RSS feed) are designed for sending latest House related information thus giving them the option to read it as per their convenience, even while they are on the move.

(5) The detailed planning and scheduling of computerization of various aspects of working of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat is the responsibility of the Computerisation Coordination Committee which meets under the

Chairmanship of the Secretary-General and includes representatives of the NIC and the Secretariat. The coordination between the broad objectives laid down by the Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha and the IT Plan are given effect by the Computerisation Coordination Committee and the IT Section. The Committee of Officers for Procurement of Computer Equipment for Rajya Sabha Secretariat (COOPCE) is headed by the Secretary and all Joint Secretaries are Members of the Committee. It considers the requests from Officers/Sections for supply of computer equipment and LAN nodes. The Obsolescence Declaration Committee considers from time to time the proposals for declaring the computer equipment held by the Secretariat obsolete within the framework of its policy. The Committee also considers the requests received from retired/retiring Officers of the Secretariat for providing computer equipment at depreciated cost.

VIII. Digitization of Debates

(1) Parliamentary debates are repository of information, discussion and deliberation held on the floor of the House. These debates are of paramount importance in understanding the role played by the House in shaping the destiny of our nation. These documents are of immense national importance and provide documentary record of the history and legacy of our Parliamentary process.

(2) Every day in Parliament, the transcript of debates generates between 300-500 pages of document. This floor version prepared by Parliamentary Reporters is called the Uncorrected Debates. The Editorial and Translation Service then edits the document, after cross checking with the concerned speakers and prepares the official version of the debates. All the official debates in printed format are available since the inception of Rajya Sabha in 1952. As is evident, the storage of these debates needs a lot of space. Besides, with the passage of time, the condition of paper copies of the Official debates also deteriorates. Copies of these debates are often required by Members, research scholars, policy makers, journalists and even ordinary citizens. But the manual searching of the printed copies of debates often becomes very tedious, cumbersome and time consuming process. Even the Rajya Sabha Secretariat staff who are familiar with such debates used to take considerably long time to cull out information manually. Thus, a need was felt to digitize the debates and make them available electronically for quick access and reference. The key benefits of the online searchable debates repository are that without visiting any physical library or making a request to the Parliament Secretariat, one can easily locate the desired and relevant portion from the parliamentary debates as per his/her convenience by just visiting the Parliament Debate Portal of the Rajya Sabha (*http://rsdebate.nic.in*).

(3) The first phase of the project covering the digitized official debates from 190 to 194 Sessions and 201 to 212 Sessions was launched by the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 18 December 2009. The same was also released in DVDs with search facility. At present the Debate portal in the Rajya Sabha website contains digitized form of the official debates from the 1st to the 222nd Sessions. Work on digitizing the official debates of the remaining Sessions is underway. This massive task, when completed, will ensure speedy and universal access to the proceedings of Rajya Sabha since its inception. Availability of such debates in electronic form, with a very advanced search engine, on the internet, is enabling people to easily explore the treasure of information contained in them. Archiving of digital assets in democratic institutions and its availability in public domain has assumed critical importance for reaching out to the people.

IX. Use of Information Technology in the Chamber

(1) Along with efforts to connect the Parliament with the people, technological know-how is being put to use to bring greater efficiency to parliamentarians' work inside the chamber. Presiding Officers continue to make several efforts with regard to efficient management of scarce legislative time so as to enhance the effectiveness of the Legislature. In recent times, certain innovative information technology tools have been put in place inside the Chamber of the Rajya Sabha, which aim at effective time management of the House. Details of a few such applications, which have the potential to bring about a perceptive change in the way parliamentary activities are carried on inside the House, are discussed in this section.

Time Management for Effective Functioning of the House

(2) With a view to managing effectively the limited legislative time, technological know-how has been put to use over the past couple of years. Among various modes of debates, discussions and interventions in the House, the device of 'matters raised with the permission of the Chair' (what is commonly known as the 'Zero Hour') provides an important opportunity to the Members to highlight pressing issues affecting the lives of people across the country. Generally, the issues agitating the minds of the Members were so involved and the number of Members eager to raise the issues were so many, that often the 'Zero Hour' turned out to be not only long-winded but also less orderly and more difficult to manage. Several initiatives were taken in the past to regulate the Zero Hour, which, *inter alia,* included fixing the time limit of three minutes for those Members whose notices had been admitted by the Chairman to raise issues of urgent public importance. For this, a digital clock was installed in the Chamber to compute the duration of the three minutes with a countdown timer. After the stipulated time, the mike of the Member automatically goes off through remote control.

This system proved to be a success as Members followed the time restriction and were able to articulate their views within the available time. Thus, up to ten matters could be articulated within a period of less than half-an-hour.

(3) Taking a cue from its success, newer information technology tools have been developed to effectively manage the time for other discussions and debates that take place inside the Chamber of the Rajya Sabha. Even the digital clock with countdown timer has been subsumed under an Integrated Talk Time Management and Display System, which has been recently put in place for time management during different discussions, including the Zero Hour submissions.

Integrated Talk Time Management and Electronic Display System

(4) An Integrated Talk Time Management and Electronic Display System has been successfully installed in the Rajya Sabha. The system, in addition to the Zero Hour submissions, also covers Short Duration Discussion, Calling Attention, Discussion on the working of the Ministries, Discussion on Government Bills as well as Private Members' Bills and Resolutions. The Rajya Sabha Secretariat has brought out a manual on this new system, which explains its operation in detail. In brief, the system is controlled by the Presiding Officer with the help of a touch screen PC placed on his/ her table. The information contained in the five lines on the touch screen is also displayed on the two LED boards installed on the two sides of the Chamber. The top of the touch screen shows the topic for discussion. The system consists of various modes depending on the type of activity going on inside the Chamber. For example, the 'Zero Hour' mode is switched on to operate in the Zero Hour. Accordingly, for the 'Zero Hour' mode, the first line of the Touch Screen shows the name of the Member who is speaking along with his party/ group affiliation. The Member's division (seat) number is shown at the left side of the second line and a countdown timer, in 'minutes: seconds' format, appears on the right side of the line. The time is displayed in the descending order from 03:00 (3 minutes) to 00:00 (zero seconds). The mike of the Member is automatically switched off when the timer reaches 00:00. The third line shows the party affiliation of the Member speaking and the fifth line shows the name of the Presiding Officer (namely the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman or the name of the Vice-Chairman). When the Chair calls the next Member to speak, his mike gets activated and the process is reiterated.

(5) At the time of a discussion, such as General Discussion on the Budget or a Short Duration Discussion, or discussion on Bills, etc., the 'Discussion' mode is selected. Along with the topic selected, the touch screen shows the name of the Member who is speaking and his/her party/

group at the time, his/her division number, and the time taken in the form of a count-up timer. It also indicates, in appropriate cases, the total time allotted to the Member's party/group and the time already consumed by earlier speakers of his/her party/ group, if any.

(6) As regards the Calling Attention, Discussion on Private Members' Bills/Resolutions, etc., the 'Member Speaking' mode is selected and the time consumed by the participating members is indicated individually, on the display board.

(7) There is also a 'Pause' function button which has been provided to pause the timer in case of any disturbance in the Chamber. Once paused, the button changes to the [Start] button. The [Start] button should be touched after the interruptions are over. The timer starts from the time it was stopped. Further, by pressing the 'Message' button, a pre-recorded message can be displayed on the boards, such as 'House Adjourned till 02:00 p.m.', 'Prime Minister's Reply', etc. The touch screen also has provision for only the Chair to view the time allotted and consumed by various parties/ groups at a given point of time by choosing the appropriate 'Party Time' buttons.

(8) The installation of this software in early 2010 has seen its impact in the number of active interventions made by Members. Before its installation, around four matters on average could be discussed in the Zero Hour; after its operation, upto ten matters are being discussed in half an hour. Members themselves come prepared to make precise speeches, parties organize their speakers according to the time allotted, and repetitive and long drawn speeches are given a go by. This has seen focused and relevant debates being conducted with far more discipline than in the past. Further measures to upgrade the system are in progress.

Dashboard Application System

(9) In order to assist the Chairman to effectively conduct the business of the House, a need has been felt for some time that information regarding Members, the location of their seats, party affiliation, States to which they belong, their involvement in the Question Hour in terms of asking Supplementary Questions, and other such data should be made available to the Chair. Another important consideration had been to streamline the process of allowing Supplementary Questions to the Members so that the Question Hour could be made more efficient and effective. The role of the Presiding Officer in giving opportunities to Members across the spectrum to ask relevant supplementaries, is one of the notable features of the Question Hour. For example, a Member who has been permitted by the Chairman to put a supplementary question on the previous or the same day may not

generally be given another opportunity during Question Hour on that day. In the Rajya Sabha, the Chairman has regulated the number of supplementaries to starred questions besides emphasizing the need for asking short and crisp supplementaries. In such a scenario, access to relevant data in an organized and coherent format was thought to be of considerable assistance to the Chairman, who earlier had to rely on the information provided to him manually or had to seek the help of the officer(s) at the Table.

(10) Against this backdrop, a Dashboard Application has been developed and subsequently installed on the Chairman's table in the Rajya Sabha Chamber. Data entry and updation required for the software are taken care of by the Secretariat through backroom operations. With the entire seating arrangement of Members, including their party affiliation and other personal details, displayed on the screen on the Chairman's table, he is able to make informed selection of Members in giving them opportunities to ask relevant supplementaries.

(11) On logging into the Dashboard Application, the opening screen displays a graphical presentation of the seating arrangement in the Chamber with the membership of different political parties indicated in different colours. The numbers mentioned on each coloured strip represent the Division Number assigned to each Member. These Division Numbers are pre-fed into the system and on clicking at a particular number, details of the Member, who has been assigned that particular seat, get displayed on the screen with the photograph of the Member, his/her name, the State to which he/she belongs, his/her party affiliation and division number. Information regarding 'Supplementary Question Status' indicating the supplementaries asked by the Member during the previous sitting, during the current week and also during the current Session is displayed at the bottom of the window. It also shows the number of such questions asked by the Members belonging to the same political party. In case of a Member of the Council of States, who is a Minister in the Union Council of Ministers, the Supplementary Question Status Window does not contain any information other than the information concerning supplementary questions asked by the Members of his/her party during the session.

(12) The Seating Arrangement data is available in visual as well as list form. The task bar at the bottom of the screen shows the following options for seeking a list or graphical display of a set of Members:

(i) Party-wise; (ii) State-wise; (iii) Gender-wise; (iv) Ministers in Rajya Sabha; (v) Nominated Members; (vi) Supplementary Questions; and (vii) Council of Ministers.

When 'Party-wise' option is clicked, the 'Select Party' scroll down menu bar, containing names of political parties in the Council, comes on the screen. Upon selecting a party name, the screen shows the graphical layout of the seating arrangement of that particular party in a pre-designated colour. For example, Indian National Congress (INC) has been allotted the blue colour; so, the division numbers (seats) which INC Members have been assigned is shown in blue colour. On selecting 'ALL' in the 'Select Party' menu bar, the graphical layout of the entire Chamber in multi-colour can be seen, each colour indicating a certain party. The legend on the right hand corner of the screen shows the names of the various parties (in alphabetical order), their respective number of Members and the colour code by which they are identified in the software. The smaller parties, each represented by a few Members, have been assigned a single colour and are collectively indicated as 'Others'.

(13) Similarly, when the 'State-wise' option is clicked, the scroll down menu bar gives the names of all the States, and on selecting a particular State, all the Members who have been elected from that State, belonging to different parties (indicated in different colours in the graphical presentation) gets displayed. The 'Gender-wise' option generates a graphical display of the male and female Members in the Rajya Sabha belonging to various parties. In the same manner, information regarding Nominated Members and Members of Rajya Sabha in the Union Council of Ministers can be accessed. The same information in the list form can be obtained by clicking on Seating Arrangement (List).

(14) On the extreme left of the Task Bar, 'Report' option is there to facilitate the Chair to find out particulars about the business in the Chamber during a particular sitting or on a specific session/date. When it is clicked, the List of Business, the papers to be laid on the Table of the House, the Part-I Bulletin containing brief record of the proceedings of the meeting of the Rajya Sabha on a particular day, the Part-II Bulletin issued for the information of the Members, synopses of the previous sittings, the Questions list, Ballot list, Minute book, Notices, Questions related information, Council of Ministers, etc. are accessible to the Chair. The Hindi version of the Dashboard Application is also available. A CD in respect of the aforesaid applications is enclosed.

X. Rajya Sabha TV Channel

The Chairman, Rajya Sabha Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, in a recent initiative, cleared the proposal for setting up of an independent TV channel owned and operated by the Rajya Sabha. Subsequently, in 2011, the Rajya Sabha Television (RSTV) came into being as a 24x7 parliamentary TV channel. This channel, which is fully owned and operated by the

Rajya Sabha, is aimed at providing in-depth coverage and analysis of parliamentary affairs, especially the functioning of and developments related to Rajya Sabha. During sessions of Parliament, apart from telecasting live coverage of the proceedings of Rajya Sabha, RSTV presents in-depth analysis of the proceedings of the House as well as other day-to-day parliamentary events. Simultaneous webcast of the channel is available at *www.rajyasabha.nic.in* and *www.rstv.nic.in* as well as on You Tube.

XI. Committee on Reduction in Use of Paper in the Functioning of Rajya Sabha

(1) The Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha, from the very beginning, was of the view that computerisation of various functions and services of the Rajya Sabha and its Secretariat would ultimately lead to a less-paper office, obviating the need for circulation of large quantities of papers and documents in hard format. The Committee, therefore, gave in-principle approval for taking initiatives for reduction in the use of paper and making available the required information digitally to the Members. Subsequently, a Committee on reduction in use of paper in the functioning of Rajya Sabha was constituted in May 2010, under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat. As an environment friendly measure, the Committee was asked to suggest ways and means for minimizing/rationalising the consumption/ usage of paper and to reduce its wastage in Rajya Sabha and its Secretariat. For wider acceptability, the representatives from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, National Informatics Centre and Press Information Bureau were also included in this Committee. The terms of reference of the Committee, *inter alia*, included:

- compilation of a list of printed documents presently being supplied to the Members by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat and the Ministries;
- to identify the printed documents, the supply of which could be dispensed with since they are available digitally.
- to work out the arrangements for supplying printed documents to the Members alternatively in CD/DVD format;
- to examine the feasibility of sending the List of Business, Parliamentary Bulletins and Debate Synopsis through e-mail to all Members as soon as they get uploaded on the websites;
- to examine the ways and means of reducing the number of copies of the documents presently being submitted by the different Departments of the Government to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat in printed/cyclostyled/photocopied form for circulation to the Members or for laying on the Table of the Rajya Sabha; and

- to recommend measures for reduction of copies in paper form, of both Starred and Unstarred questions, for use in the Secretariat and for supply to the Members and Media.

(2) The Committee submitted its Report (available on the Rajya Sabha intranet at *http://10.21.217.2/paper_reduction.pdf*) to the 'Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha' on 20 December 2010. The Committee has directed that the Report may be circulated to Members to elicit their comments/suggestions on the proposed measures to provide information to Members in electronic form to reduce the supply of paper copies of parliamentary documents. After receipts of comments from some of the Members, the matter has been placed before the Committee for consideration. Action on the recommendations relating to the functioning of the Secretariat has already been initiated.

XII. Summing Up

The ICT have benefited the parliamentary institutions tremendously not only by making their working more transparent and efficient but also in imparting them greater legitimacy in people's eyes. It has helped them in widening and strengthening their oversight functions. Experience has shown that a wider use of internet, intranet and adoption of customised softwares have considerably made possible the transmission of information, reports, publications, data, news, etc. instantly, inexpensively and with least usage of paper. It has tremendous potential in saving resources and time apart from enabling Parliaments to realise the values of transparency, accessibility and accountability. It has provided means to parliamentary institutions to engage a new generation of citizens for whom the ICT are central to their way of life. There is also a greater need for inter-parliamentary collaboration to make progress towards the adoption of ICT in the functioning of parliamentary institutions. This aspect has also been emphasised by the World e-Parliament Report 2010 which *inter alia* states: "It can be argued that in the age of the Information Society, the ability of Parliaments to fulfill their responsibilities as representatives of the people and to attain the highest levels of openness requires the effective and creative application of ICT in their daily work. It can be further argued that to achieve these goals, Parliaments have to be able to share experiences, knowledge and ideas with each other in regional and international settings in a collaborative global environment". Such interactions at the national level is also required to help broaden our perspectives on the various initiatives being taken by State Legislatures to adopt innovative ways in their functioning which are both people-centric as well as environment friendly. Today, when legislatures face a critical challenge of declining public trust and confidence, a lot depends on developing innovative ways to enhance their performance and reaching out to the people at large. Information technology tools, if utilized in the right earnest would help to bridge this gap and also become an eco-friendly means of minimizing the use of papers in our legislative institutions.

THE PROVISION OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT
(MEMBERS OF RAJYA SABHA AND OFFICERS) RULES, 2008

1. SHORT TITLE, EXTENT AND COMMENCEMENT

(i) These rules may be called the Provision of Computer Equipment (Members of Rajya Sabha and Officers) Rules, 2008.

(ii) They extend to Members of Rajya Sabha and Officers of Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

(iii) They shall come into force on the 1st April, 2008.

2. DEFINITIONS

In these rules and procedures unless the context otherwise requires:-

(i) "Annexure" means an Annexure to these rules.

(ii) "Committee" means the Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha.

(iii) "Computer equipment" means all electronic gadgets capable of storing, retrieving, processing, scanning, transferring and printing of data by whatever name called, and includes all equipment specified in the Annexure.

(iv) "Member" for the purpose of these rules means a sitting Member of Rajya Sabha.

(v) "NIC" means the National Informatics Centre of the Department of Information Technology, Government of India.

(vi) "NICSI" means the National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated set up as a company under the National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Government of India, to provide total IT solution to the Government organizations.

(vii) "Officer" means an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary in Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

(viii) "Scheme" means the Scheme of Financial Entitlement of Members of Rajya Sabha for Computer Equipment, as delineated in Rules, 4, 5 and 6.

(ix) "Secretariat" means the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

(x) "Software" means a programme or a set of programmes used to operate a computer, and includes a system software.

(xi) "STAC" means the Standing Technical Advisory Committee constituted under Rule 8.

3. PROVISION OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

Computer equipment shall be made available to the Members and Officers to enable them to discharge their functions/duties.

4. SCHEME OF FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENT OF MEMBERS OF RAJYA SABHA FOR COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

(i) The computer equipment shall be made available to the Members through a Scheme of financial entitlement.

(ii) The financial entitlement of a Member for purchasing computer equipment and software under the Scheme shall be as follows:

(a) Rs. 2,00,000/- if he is elected/nominated to Rajya Sabha on or after 1st April, 2008.

(b) Rs. 2,00,000/- if he was elected/nominatd to Rajya Sabha before 1st April, 2008 but has not been supplied any computer equipment by the Secretariat.

(c) Rs. 2,00,000/- minus the depreciated cost of the handheld communicator (Rs. 4,800/- in the case of Nokia 9500 and Rs. 4400 in the case of Nokia 9300i) if he was elected/nominated to Rajya Sabha before 1st April, 2008 but has not been supplied any computer equipment by the Secretariat except Nokia handheld communicator.

(d) Rs. 1,50,000/- if he is elected/nominated to Rajya Sabha on or after 1st April, 2008 on a casual vacancy for a term of three years or less.

(e) Rs. 1,25,000/- if he was elected/nominated to Rajya Sabha before 1st April, 2008 and has been supplied computer equipment by the Secretariat.

(iii) The adequacy of the amounts specified in Sub-rule (ii) shall be reviewed by the Committee annually and revision, if any, shall take effect prospectively.

(iv) Under the Scheme, Members shall be entitled to purchase any or all of the items of computer equipment specified in the Annexure. The Committee shall review every year, at the time of reviewing financial entitlement, if any items should be added to or deleted from the specified list.

(v) The Members shall be free to purchase any model of the computer equipment and software, specified in the Annexure, at any time

during their term. The Members shall be equally free to purchase any mix of computer equipment specified in the Annexure subject to the condition that the amount of reimbursement/payment shall not exceed the "entitlement" as fixed by the Committee:

Provided that in case the cost of equipment purchased by the Members exceeds his financial entitlement, the difference between the said cost and the said entitlement shall be borne by the Member himself.

(vi) The Committee shall notify, from time to time, the procedure regulating the purchase of computer equipment by the Members, including restrictions, if any, to be imposed in this regard.

(vii) The financial entitlement of a Member shall be the amount last fixed by the Committee before his election/nomination to the Rajya Sabha. His entitlement shall not be affected by modifications made by the Committee in the amount, subsequent to his election/nomination. Unless specified by the Committee, all modifications to the amount of entitlement shall be with prospective effect.

(viii) The computer equipment purchased by a Member under the Scheme shall remain with him even after he ceases to be a Member.

(ix) Subject to proviso of Sub-rule (ii)(c), computer equipment supplied to a Member before 1st April, 2008 shall remain with him without payment of any depreciation cost.

5. REIMBURSEMENT/PAYMENT TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

(i) Subject to provisions of Sub-rules (ii) and (v) of Rule 4, a Member shall be able to avail of the Scheme by adopting one of the following two procedures:

(a) He may purchase the computer equipment and pass on the proof of payment to the IT Section for reimbursement. On certification by the IT Section, the MS&A Section shall make the reimbursement to the Member; or

(b) He may bring a Proforma Invoice for the computer equipment to be procured. On certification by the IT Section, the MS&A Section shall make the payment directly to the vendor.

(ii) The Member shall make available the proof of purchase, within 30 days from the date of release of payment, to the Secretariat for the purpose of record and audit.

6. MAINTENANCE AND INSURANCE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

(i) It shall be for the Member to decide if he wishes to get the computer equipment purchased under the Scheme insured, and he shall do so himself. Similarly, the arrangement for the maintenance of the computer equipment shall be made by the Member himself.

(ii) The provisions of Sub-rule (i) shall apply equally to the computer equipment supplied to Members before 1st April, 2008, from the date of his joining the Scheme.

7. PROVISION OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT FOR OFFICERS

(i) Officers shall be provided computer equipment at their residences, as approved by the Chairman of the Committee from time to time, after procuring the same through NICSI. The maintenance for such equipment shall be provided by the Secretariat.

(ii) No officer shall be permitted to purchase the computer before his retirement/leaving the Secretariat on completion of tenure. An officer may however request for upgrading the computer after three years of supply. In case it is not technically feasible to upgrade the computer, it shall be replaced by a new one.

(iii) The cost to be charged from officers for purchase of computer equipment shall be calculated @ 60% depreciation per year on the written down value. The cost of software and maintenance shall not be taken into account while calculating depreciation.

8. STANDING TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC)

(i) The Committee shall constitute a Standing Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) comprising officers of the Secretariat and the NIC. The Committee shall be free to vary the composition of STAC as it deems fit.

(ii) STAC shall advise the Committee regarding:

(a) annual review of the Scheme, particularly with regard to revision of financial entitlement of Members and additions/deletions/modifications in the list of computer equipment at Annexure;

(b) any other matter that the Committee may refer to it.

9. TRAINING

The Secretariat may organize, from time to time, training programmes for the Members and Officers, in collaboration with the NIC, to familiarize them with the use of computer equipment and softwares.

10. PROVISION FOR RELAXATION OF RULES

Notwithstanding anything contained in these Rules, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha may relax any rule in its application, if so recommended by the Committee.

11. PROVISION FOR AMENDMENT

These rules may be amended with the approval of the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

12. REPEAL

The Provision of Computers to Members of Parliament and Officers-Rules and Procedures, 1995 are hereby repealed without prejudice to anything done under those rules before the coming into force of these rules.

ANNEXURE

**Items of Computer Equipment and Software
[Sub-rule (vi) of Rule 4 refers]**

1. Desktop Computer
2. Laptop Computer
3. Pen drive
4. Printer (Desk Jet/Laser Jet/Multi-function/portable)
5. Scanner
6. UPS (with desktop only)
7. Handheld communicator/computer
8. Data internet cards
9. MS Office suite
10. Language softwares and Speech recognition softwares
11. E-reader
12. Computer Monitor
13. External Hard Drive

PROCEDURE TO REGULATE THE PURCHASE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT UNDER THE PROVISION OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT (MEMBERS OF RAJYA SABHA AND OFFICERS) RULES, 2008

I. Admissible Hardware/Software

The following computer equipment and software can be purchased by the Members under the Rules:

(i) Desktop Computer
(ii) Laptop Computer
(iii) Pen drive
(iv) Printer (DeskJet/LaserJet/Multi-function/portable)
(v) Scanner
(vi) UPS (with desktop only)
(vii) Handheld communicator/computer
(viii) Data internet card
(ix) MS Office suite
(x) Language softwares and Speech recognition softwares
(xi) E-reader
(xii) Computer Monitor
(xiii) External Hard Drive

II. Desktop Computers/Printers

2. The list of Computer Manufacturers approved by the Committee for the purpose of purchase of desktop computers and printers is as follows:

  (i)   M/s Acer India Ltd.

 (ii)   M/s HP India Ltd.

(iii)   M/s Lenovo India Ltd.

(iv)   M/s Dell Ltd.

  (v)   M/s Wipro Ltd.

(vi)   M/s PCS Ltd.

3. In case a Member purchases a desktop and/or printer of a reputed brand, which is not one of the approved brands mentioned in para 2 above, the bill/claim for the same will be admitted subject to the approval of the same by the Chairman of the Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha.

4. In case a multifunction product, which *inter alia* functions as a printer is purchased by a Member. it shall be allowed under the definition of Multifunction Printers. However, if a Member buys a multifunction printer of a reputed brand, other than brands approved by the Committee, the bill/claim for the same will be admitted subject to the approval of the same by the Chairman of the Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha.

5. Members should, ideally, purchase desktop computers/printers from the approved manufacturers or their authorized vendors. They may also purchase desktop computers and printers from a vendor of their choice; however, in that case, they should satisfy themselves about the genuineness of the products, warranty cover and the quality of after-sales service support.

III. Laptop/Handheld Computers/E-readers

6. Members will have complete freedom of choice in respect of Laptop computer/Handheld communicator/computer and E-reader and may purchase any model/brand thereof, from any vendor. However, they should satisfy themselves about the genuineness of the products, warranty cover and the quality of after-sales service support.

IV. Provision of a customized E-reader compatible device to Members

7. The financial entitlement of Members has been enhanced from Rs.1,50,000/- to Rs. 2,00,000/- *w.e.f.* 1.4.2011 primarily to facilitate Members to acquire a customized device, which may reduce their dependency on

paper copies of Parliamentary documents and thereby achieve the goal of reduction in the use of paper. Members can purchase any model E-reader device approved by the Committee. The Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha shall be responsible for initialising such a device with customized Parliament specific applications and making it available to Members.

8. Procurement of one such device by Members using their enhanced financial entitlement is mandatory. Cost towards the device shall be kept aside from the financial entitlement of each Member and a Member shall not be eligible to utilize this amount out of his/her due financial entitlement for purchase of any other computer equipment/software. However, out of this enhanced amount if any amount remains unutilized after the purchase of one E-reader device, that amount can be used by the Members for purchase of any other item(s) permitted under the Scheme.

9. Arrangements for obtaining warranty services, maintenance and insurance towards the computer equipment that Members purchase using their financial entitlement shall be made by Members themselves.

V. Other Equipment/Software

10. In case of purchase of a Data Internet Card by a Member, reimbursement towards such tariff plans, in which the cost of Data Internet Card was inbuilt, shall be allowed.

11. Members should purchase licensed software for use in the computers procured under the Scheme specified in the Rules.

VI. Proof of Purchase

12. The Rules require a Member to produce a proof of purchase within 30 days of making the purchase of computer equipment. A bill/invoice/any other document, issued by the vendor, would constitute an admissible proof of purchase provided it contains/reflects:

    (i)   the serial number of each equipment sold;

   (ii)   the fact that the goods have been delivered; and

 (iii)   the fact that the payment has been received in full.

VII. Removal of Difficulties

13. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to this procedure, the Chairman of the Committee on Provision of Computer Equipment to Members of Rajya Sabha may make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of the Rules, as appear to be necessary or expedient for removing that difficulty.

Official Websites

rajyasabha.nic.in
rajyasabhahindi.nic.in

Rajya Sabha:

Rajya Sabha (Council of States), the Upper House of the Parliament of India, has been aggressively using the information & communication technologies to disseminate information relating to its working and procedures through its bilingual website—*http://rajyasabha.nic.in.* The Rajya Sabha website, designed and developed with the technical support of the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India has been operational since 2001 and is being actively used by Members of Parliament, other legislatures, media and general public.

An exercise had been undertaken to comprehensively re-design its website to make it more user friendly and easily navigable as well as to use the latest website development technologies, in order to make it compliant with the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites formulated by NIC and circulated by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The result is the new website of the Rajya Sabha. It is hoped that the comprehensive re-designed website with enhanced functionality would result in bringing uniformity in the layout, ease of accessing information and the quality of the content and will thereby enhance the overall usability and functionality of the website.

The website can be accessed at the internet address *http://rajyasabha.nic.in* . This website is exclusively dedicated to the Rajya Sabha. The website includes a wealth of information on the business listed and transacted in the House, record of debates held in the House, Parliament Questions and their Answers, Status of Legislation, Information relating to various Committees of the House, Who's Who of Members, their addresses and e-mails, Rules of Procedure of the Rajya Sabha, Secretariat related information etc. Much of the information is backed by number of structured databases and information is updated on daily basis. The past data of several years relating to Parliament Questions, Debates, Bills, committees and other legislative information is accessible through the website.

The Rajya Sabha website is intended for government departments, legislative bodies in India and abroad, academic Institutions, research scholars, print and visual media and the general public.

About Rajya Sabha

An introduction to the Upper House of Indian Parliament (Council of States), its Presiding Officers—Hon'ble Chairman and Hon'ble Deputy Chairman and information about Leader of the House, Leader of Opposition and Secretary-General has been provided.

Business

This link contains the List of Business (agenda), Papers to be laid on the Table, Bulletin Part-I & II, Official Debates, Synopsis of daily proceedings, Questions and answers with Search facility, Sessions' Journal etc. Also, Database of Bills (Legislation) with extensive search facility and sessional information on the progress of Bills is available.

Members

Data bases about Members contain information about Sitting, Former and Nominated Members, their Home pages provide information about their Parliamentary activities, MPLADS fund usage etc. Extensive search facility on various parameters has also been provided.

Committees

Database of Meetings, Engagements, Recommendations and Membership of various committees of Rajya Sabha, as well as complete Committee Reports in highly presentable formats enabling viewers to get specific queries answered easily have been made available.

Procedures

Rules, procedures and precedents in easily accessible formats are available. Also Rulings, Directions and Observations of Hon'ble Chairman can be readily assessed.

Salient features of New Website of Rajya Sabha

- Self Explanatory Menu/ Submenu Options.

- Menu More than two Lakh Static Files.

- About 1 TB of SQL Databases about Legislative information.

- Site developed in .NET 2.0

- Security Audit of the website done by NIC Cyber Security Division. Third Party audit by M/s Secureyes.

- Website designed and developed as per the "guidelines for Indian Government Websites" prepared by NIC and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

- Rajya Sabha website conforms to W3C guidelines (Level A)

- Website conforms to ISO Standards 23026.

- Ease of Navigation.

Secretariat

Information about Organizational set up of the Secretariat, its Services and Officers/Sections responsible, Recruitment Rules, Office Manual, Annual reports etc. can be accessed.

Audio-visuals

Archival photographs, photographs of the Parliament House Complex as well as a photo album providing visuals of the functions held by the Secretariat are made available. Video footage and Live Webcasting of the Rajya Sabha Proceedings during the session.

General Information

Information and documents on practice and procedures of Parliament, privileges of Parliament and its Members, Publications of Rajya Sabha, Souvenir items etc. can be accessed. Also a link to all the required information under the Right to Information Act is available.

Links

Links to other legislative sites, official sites of the Government of India, Parliament Library etc. are also available for users.

Site Map

Comprehensive Site Map with links to all the website pages has been provided.

For any other Information, Suggestion, feedback Please Contact or write to

Address	:	**The Rajya Sabha**
		Parliament House,
		Sansad Marg, New Delhi-110 001
Website	:	**http://rajyasabha.nic.in**
Email	:	**rsccell@nic.in, swarabji.b@sansad.nic.in**
Telephone	:	**91-11-23034246**

Parliamentary Information available on Rajya Sabha Websites

Websites of Rajya Sabha are available on Internet with the NIC support in English and Hindi and the same can be accessed at the website address *http://rajyasabha.nic.in* and *http://rajyasabhahindi.nic.in.* These are separate websites exclusively dedicated to Rajya Sabha and can also be accessed through Parliament of India website *(http://parliamentofindia.nic.in).* The Rajya Sabha websites, at present, contains information regarding various aspects of the functioning of the House and its Committees including Questions, Bills, Assurances, Debates, Committee matters, etc. Members bio-data with search facility has also been provided and information relating to the MPLADS can also be accessed from this site. Most of the information is supported by online databases. The information available is updated daily especially with regard to List of Business, Part I and Part II Bulletins, etc. so that Members can see the Parliamentary information well in advance. The website includes the following information:-

About Rajya Sabha: An introduction to the Upper House of Indian Parliament (Council of States), its Presiding Officers—Hon'ble Chairman and Hon'ble Deputy Chairman and information about Leader of the House, Leader of Opposition and Secretary-General has been provided.

Business: This link contains the List of Business (agenda), Papers to be laid on the Table, Bulletin Part-I & II, Official Debates, Synopsis of daily proceedings, Questions and answers with Search facility, Sessions' Journal etc. Also, Database of Bills (Legislation) with extensive search facility and sessional information on the progress of Bills is available.

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Links: Links to other legislative sites, official sites of the Government of India, Parliament Library etc. are also available for users.

Site Map: Comprehensive Site Map with links to all the website pages has been provided.

At present the following information is available at the Rajya Sabha website:

Item	English	Hindi
List of Business	From 186th Session to till date	From 188th Session till date
Parliamentary Bulletin Part-I	From 187th Session to till date	From 188th Session till date
Parliamentary Bulletin Part-II	From October, 1998	From 1999 till date
Synopsis of Debate	From 188th Session to till date	From 186th Session till date
Verbatim Debates	From 189th Session to till date	From 189th Session till date
Parliament Questions	From 170th Session to till date	From 194th Session till date
Government Assurances	From 135th Session to till date	From 135th Session till date
Session-wise statement of Bills passed by the Houses of Parliament	From 186th Session to till date	188th to 202nd Session
Bills pending at the end of Session	From 188th Session to till date	From 188th Session till date
Resume of Business	From 186th Session to till date	From 186th Session till date
Session Journals	From 174th Session to till date	From 174th Session till date
Papers laid	From 192nd Session to till date	From 192nd Session till date
Parliament Questions List	From 194th Session to till date	From 194th Session to till date
Bills with Committees	Bills referred to various Committees	

A list of publications electronically available on the Rajya Sabha website is placed at *Annexure III*. The list of publications available in the printed format along with their prices and list of authorized sales agents for these publications are also given on the Rajya Sabha internet site. A number

of publications which are used by the Secretariat staff for reference purpose has been electronically provided in the Rajya Sabha intranet site.

As members and ex-members are quite keen to know details of the record about the issues raised by them in the House from time to time and in order to provide the necessary service to them, the LARRDIS as well as the Rajya Sabha Secretariat often have to search manually through old records. Since now much of the information is available in databases, a comprehensive Member-wise facility on Internet has been developed wherein on selecting the name of the Member, information regarding any of the following aspects can be displayed:

- Questions put by the Member
- Assurances given to the Member
- Bills introduced by the Member
- Membership in various Committees
- Bio-data
- MPLADS information relating to the Member
- Member's Homepage

The information has been made available on Internet so that the Member can directly access the information, if he desires.

In the process of computerisation of Parliamentary services to Members of Rajya Sabha some of the Notice forms have been made computer compatible and made available on the website. At present, the following notice forms are available in computer compatible format:

(i)   Short Notice Question

(ii)   Half-an-Hour Discussion

(iii)   Calling Attention

(iv)   Short Duration Discussion

(v)   Notice of Motion

(vi)   Special Mention

(vii)   Private Members' Resolution

Publications in Electronic Form

- REPORT OF THE INQUIRY COMMITTEE UNDER THE JUDGES (INQUIRY) ACT, 1968

- Praxis of Parliamentary Committees: Recommendations of Committee on Rules (pdf Size:160KB) New

- Welcome hon'ble Chairman Sir, 2007 (pdf Size:234KB)

- Structure & functions of Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 2009 (pdf Size:140KB) New

- Second chamber in Indian Parliament: Role and status of Rajya Sabha 2009 (pdf Size:63KB)

- Reservation of Seats for Women in Legislative Bodies: Perspectives 2008 (pdf Size:127KB)

- Global Economic Crisis and Its Impact on India 2009 (pdf Size:133KB)

- Climate change: Challenges to sustainable development in India 2008 (pdf Size:87.2KB)

- Parliamentary Procedures: Problems and Perspectives 2009 (pdf Size:218KB)

- Demystifying Question Hour: Budget Session 2008 (pdf Size:63.5KB)

- Sansadiya Shabdavali 2009 (Bi-lingual)(pdf Size:939KB)

- Handbook of Publications (pdf Size:72.9KB)

- Genetically modified CROPS issues and challenges in the context of India (pdf Size:217KB)

- Committees of Rajya Sabha and Other Parliamentary Committees and Bodies on which Rajya Sabha is represented (2009-2010)

- Report of the group constituted by the Chairman to go into the Question of issues pertaining to State subject/Legislatures which can be raised and discussed in the house (pdf Size:145KB)

- Chairman's Reply to the felicitation in Rajya Sabha (26-08-1997) (pdf Size:90.1KB)

- Manual for Handling Parliamentary Work in Ministries

- Discipline, Decorum and Dignity of Parliament

- Fifty Years of Rajya Sabha (1952-2002)
- Nominated members of Rajya Sabha (1952-2002)
- Computerisation in Rajya Sabha - An Overview
- COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN RAJYA SABHA (1952-2002)
- Ethics Committee of Rajya Sabha, 2003
- Salary Allowances & Pension of MPs Act 1954
- Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States
- Directions from the Chair
- Rajya Sabha At Work
- Rajya Sabha - List of Members
- Handbook for Members of Rajya Sabha

RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT INTRANET APPLICATIONS

Intranet		rajyasabha.nic.in
All Sections	**Bill Office**	**Committee Coordination Section**
SMS Utility Download PDF Creator Download Indian Rupee Symbol Circular/office orders Information System Document Management Information System Events Tenders	Bills Information System	Nomination Information System
Conference and Protocol Section	**Committee Sections**	**Committee Section - I**
Delegation Abroad Information System	Report Publishing Information System Bills/Press Releases Publishing Information System	Subordinate Lesiglation Information System
Committee on Paper Laid	**Committee III (CGA)**	**Deputy Chairman**
Paper Laid Information System	CGA-Information System	Deputy Chairman-Information System
D-Branch	**Estt (A/c) & Budget Section (CGA)**	**Editing (English)**
MP's Delivery Addresses	TA/DA Bill Information System Sanction Orders	Verbatim Debates Information System (English)
GA' Section	**LARRDIS**	**Legislative Branch**
Telephone Directory Information System E-Awas	Members Who's Who	Council of ministers Information System Legislative Information Publishing Special mentions Information System
Lobby Office	**Media ,Education & Audio-Visual Unit**	**Members' Amenities Section**
Journals Publishing Member's Attendance Information System	Press & Media Information System	E-FILE System E-Awas Telephone Directory Allied Services
Members' Salary Accounts Section	**Notice Office**	**Personnel & Administration Section**
Ex-MPs Addresses	Notice Office Information System	Org. Chart/Section-wise Chart Org. Chart/Section-wise Chart (Hindi Version)
PAO Section	**Question Branch**	**Rajbhasha Prabhag**
PAO Information System	Parliament - Question/Answer Publishing System Ministry wise Subjects Search Ministry wise Subjects Publishing Questions List Publishing Questions Processing	Words of the Day Information System
Reporter's Branch	**Recruitment Cell**	**Synopsis Section**
Verbatim Proceeding Publishing Digital Audio	Appointments/Recruitment Information System	Synopsis Publishing System Synopsis Index Preparation System
Table Office	**Training Unit**	**Translation Section**
Bulletin-II Publishing Daily Business Publishing Members Information System Precedents Search Precedents Information System	New Training Information Information System Training Information System	Daily Papers Publishing Daily Hindi ballot list Publishing Members Information System (Hindi) Official debate(Hindi) Search Parliamentary Bulletin-1
RTI	.	.
RTI Application Management System	.	.