



Questioning in Parliament

For Prelims: Questioning in Parliament, [Lok Sabha Ethics Committee](#), [Central Bureau of Investigation](#), Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, Member of Parliaments (MPs), Rajya Sabha.

For Mains: Questioning in Parliament, Parliament and State Legislatures.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, one of the [Member of Parliaments \(MPs\)](#) has been questioned by the [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#) and the [Lok Sabha Ethics Committee](#), in her alleged involvement in 'cash for query' allegations.

- The member had allowed an individual to use her parliamentary login and password to **post questions on her behalf** in the Lok Sabha with the intention of furthering a particular agenda or receiving compensation for doing so.
- These allegations raised concerns about the ethical conduct of parliamentarians and the potential misuse of their positions for personal gain.

What is the Procedure for Raising Questions in Parliament?

- **Procedure:**
 - **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha:** The procedure for raising questions is governed by **Rules 32 to 54 of the "Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha"** and Directions 10 to 18 of the "Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha".
 - To ask a question, an MP has to first **give a notice addressed to the lower house's Secretary-General**, intimating their intention to ask a question.
 - The notice usually contains the text of the question, the official designation of the Minister to whom the question is addressed, the date on which the answer is desired, and the order of preference, in case the MP tables more than one notice of questions for the same day.
 - MPs can **submit up to five notices of questions (both oral and written) for a single day**. Notices exceeding this limit are considered for subsequent days within the same session.
 - **Notice Period:** Typically, the notice period for a question is **not less than 15 days**.
 - MPs can submit their notices either through an online 'Member's Portal' or by using printed forms from the Parliamentary Notice Office.
 - The Speaker of Lok Sabha reviews the notices and determines their admissibility based on established rules.
- **Conditions for Question Admissibility:**
 - Questions must not **exceed 150 words** and should avoid containing arguments,

- defamatory statements, or references to personal conduct, except in an official or public capacity.
- Questions that pertain to broad policy issues are not admissible due to the impracticality of addressing complex policies within a brief answer.
- Questions cannot concern matters under judicial consideration or before parliamentary committees. They should also **avoid seeking information that could undermine national unity and integrity**.

Note

In Rajya Sabha, the admissibility of questions is governed by **Rules 47-50 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business** in the Council of States. Among various norms, the question **“shall be pointed, specific and confined to one issue only”**.

What are the Categories of Questions?

- **Starred Question:**
 - A starred question is asked by an MP and answered orally by the Minister-in-charge. Each MP is allowed to **ask one starred question** per day. When a question is answered orally, **supplementary questions can be asked thereon**.
- **UnStarred Question:**
 - The MP seeks a **written answer**, which is deemed to be laid on the table of the House by the concerned minister and **supplementary questions cannot be followed**.
- **Short Notice Question:**
 - These are on an urgent matter of public importance, and an **oral answer is sought**. For asking such a question, a notice of less than 10 days is prescribed as the minimum period.
- **Question to Private Member:**
 - A question can be addressed to a private member under Rule 40 of Lok Sabha's Rules of Procedure, or under Rule 48 of Rajya Sabha's Rules, provided that the question deals with a subject relating to some Bill, resolution or other matter for which that member is responsible.

What is the Significance of Raising Questions?

- **Parliamentary Right:**
 - Asking questions is an inherent and **unrestricted parliamentary right of MPs**, serving as a tool for legislative control over executive actions.
- **Functions of Questioning:**
 - This exercise allows MPs to **acquire information on government activities**, critique policies, highlight government shortcomings, and prompt ministers to take steps for the common good.
- **Government's Perspective:**
 - For the government, questions provide insight into public sentiment regarding policies and **administration**. They can lead to the formation of parliamentary commissions, inquiries, or the enactment of legislation.

Way Forward

- Under Article 75 of the constitution, asking questions in parliament is a constitutional right of a member of the House. Viewed from this angle, the Question Hour in parliament stands on a different footing.
- In a way, every Question Hour is the manifestation of a direct kind of democracy in operation, in the sense that representation of the people directly questions the government on matters of governance, and the government is duty bound to answer the questions in the House.
- The concerned officials also should give a good reason on why a question should be disallowed.

The reason also cannot be accessed through [RTIs \(Right to Information\)](#) due to [privilege of the House](#) — tough to take it to court as well.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. The Parliament of India exercises control over the functions of the Council of Ministers through (2017)

1. Adjournment motion
2. Question hour
3. Supplementary questions

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

- Adjournment motion is introduced in the Parliament to draw attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance. It interrupts the normal business of the House, thereby making it a device of censure against the government. **Hence, 1 is correct.**
- **Question Hour is a tool of “Parliamentary Oversight”** over the administration or executive. During Question Hour, the government is answerable for all its acts of omission and commission to the Parliament.
 - There are four types of questions: **Starred Questions, Unstarred Questions, Short Notice Question and Question to Private Member. Hence, 2 is correct.**
- Under the Starred Question, an oral answer is required from the minister and the members are allowed to ask the supplementary questions. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

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