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## 15-Point Reforms Charter for Parliament

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### Why in News?

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For effective and better functioning of the Parliament and the State Legislatures, Vice President of India recently introduced a 15 point reform charter.

### Key Points

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He highlighted various problems that adversely impact the legislative institutions and suggested remedial measures for them.

### Issued Charter

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- **Political Conscience:** Call for a new **political consciousness** amongst legislators to review their roles and responsibilities.
- **Quorum:** Political parties must **ensure attendance** of at least 50% of their legislators throughout the proceedings of the Houses by **adopting a roster system**.  
This was needed in the backdrop of required **Quorum** (of 10% of the strength of the Houses), which if not met, leads to the adjournment of the House.
- **Whip:** Review of **Whip system** which hinders **the freedom of expression** of the legislators.  
This will allow a reasonable degree of dissent without impacting the stability of the government.
- **Anti- Defection:** Review of the **Anti Defection Law** to rectify the areas like incentivizing legislators to resort to actions that invite expulsion from the party besides providing for time-bound disposal of defection cases by the Presiding Officer.
- **Department Related Standing Committees:** Measures for effective functioning of **Department Related Standing Committees** like longer tenure (instead of the present one year), promoting specialization, etc were needed.

- **Legislative Impact Assessment:** A detailed framework for pre and post Legislative Impact Assessment was needed.  
Every legislative proposal must incorporate a detailed account of social, economic, environmental and administrative impact for wider awareness and subsequent legal assessment.
- **Voting Preferences:** Need for **moving away from identity-based voting to that of development-oriented** exercise of voting preferences. Role of caste, community, region, and religion in influencing the voting preferences needs to be **minimized**.
- **Responsible Government and Opposition:** Need for **responsive governments** positively acting on the concerns of the opposition and the need for **responsible and constructive opposition** while resorting to available parliamentary instruments.
- **Simultaneous Polls:** Building consensus on the proposal of **simultaneous polls** to allow unrestricted governance.
- **Reservation of Women:** Enacting for **reservation of women in legislatures**.
- **Rules and Regulations:** Making rules that automatically take action against erring members in case of interruptions and disruptions. Need for timely and effective action against legislators for non-ethical conduct.
- **Transparency & Accountability: Regular publication of reports** by the Secretariats of Legislatures on the attendance of Members and their participation in debates.
- **Addressing** the concern of a rising number of **legislators with criminal records**.
- Setting up of **special courts** for time-bound adjudication of criminal complaints against legislators.
- A **minimum number of sittings** for both the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures per year need to be appropriately prescribed.

**Source: PIB**