



PRESS RELEASE ON THE 163RD REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE

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The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice chaired by Shri Brij Lal, MP, Rajya Sabha, presented its **163rd Report** on the Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the **Legislative Department** (Ministry of Law and Justice) on 16th March, 2026 to both the Houses of Parliament.

While examining the Demands for Grants, the Committee has made an appraisal of performance, programmes, and policies of the Legislative Department and the Election Commission of India *vis-à-vis* expenditure made out of Consolidated Fund of India in the current financial year during the meeting held on 19th February, 2026. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 12th March, 2026. The Recommendations/Observations made by the Committee in this Report are enclosed. For reference purpose para Nos. of the Report are mentioned at the end of each recommendation/observation. The entire Report is also available on <http://sansad.in/rs>

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN

163rd REPORT ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2026-27) OF THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS AND POLICY ISSUES PERTAINING TO LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

1. The Committee is pleased to note the satisfactory pace of expenditure during the year 2025-26. However, the Committee observes that during 2024-25 the actual expenditure of ₹4229.014 crore exceeded the Revised Estimates totalling ₹3468.408 crore. Such deviation indicates shortcomings in budget forecasting and financial planning. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department strengthen its budget estimation and forecasting mechanisms so that projections are more realistic and aligned with anticipated expenditure.

(Para 2.11)

2. The Committee recommends that the Department may furnish a detailed explanation for the substantial increase in the Revised Estimates for 2025-26 and the corresponding low level of expenditure under this head. The Committee further desires that the Department should undertake realistic assessment

of requirements and prepare a clear procurement and expenditure roadmap for EVMs, so as to avoid large variations between Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and actual expenditure in future.

(Para 2.16)

3. The Committee notes the significant year-to-year variation in allocations and expenditure under this head. The Committee recommends that the Department should furnish a detailed explanation for the substantial decline from the actual expenditure of ₹1732.02 crore in 2024–25 to the Budget Estimates of ₹300.00 crore for 2026–27. The Committee further desires that the Commission should adopt a realistic and forward-looking approach while estimating expenditure under this head, so as to minimise large fluctuations in future budgetary provisions.

(Para 2.19)

4. The Committee notes the sharp fluctuations in allocations and the absence of expenditure during 2025–26 under this head. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should furnish explanation for the non-utilisation of funds during 2025–26 and the subsequent increase in the Budget Estimates for 2026–27.

(Para 2.21)

POLICY ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE DEPARTMENT

Staff Strength in the Department

5. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department may take expeditious steps to fill up the large number of vacant posts across all its units, particularly in critical technical and professional categories. The Committee further recommends that recruitment processes may be streamlined and closely monitored so as to avoid prolonged vacancies. The Committee also desires to be apprised of a time-bound action plan for filling up these posts, so as to ensure adequate institutional capacity for effective discharge of its mandated functions.

(Para 2.26)

Repealing of Obsolete and Redundant Laws

6. The Committee appreciates the steps taken so far in this regard and desires that the Department may make further efforts to repeal obsolete and redundant laws through a regular and time-bound review mechanism and evolve a systematic framework for periodic identification of outdated statutory provisions in consultation with stakeholders. The Committee further desires that post-legislative impact assessments of major repealing and amending exercises be undertaken at regular interval to assess their effectiveness in reducing litigation, compliance burden and administrative delays.

(Para 2.31)

7. The Committee is of considered view that the increasing volume and complexity of legislative work necessitates continuous strengthening of institutional capacity. The Committee desires that the Legislative Department undertake a comprehensive assessment of its workload, staffing pattern and skill requirements, particularly during peak legislative periods, and evolve structured internal review and quality control mechanisms. The Committee further desires that a clear roadmap be formulated for strengthening drafting and scrutiny processes so as to enhance drafting precision, ensure consistency between principal and subordinate legislation, and minimize avoidable litigation arising from drafting or interpretational ambiguities.

(Para 2.34)

OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS AND POLICY ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

8. The Committee recommends that the Department should formulate future Budget Estimates for training activities on a realistic and evidence-based basis, taking into account past expenditure trends and actual requirements. The Committee note that the actual expenditure under this head stood at ₹21.38 crore in 2023–24 and ₹15.64 crore in 2024–25, whereas the Budget Estimates for 2026–27 have been fixed at ₹40.00 crore. The Committee, therefore, desires that the Department should prepare a detailed annual training plan along with a quarterly expenditure roadmap so as to ensure optimal utilisation of the enhanced allocation and to minimise the need for substantial mid-year revisions, such as the increase of ₹21.00 crore witnessed during 2025–26 at the Revised Estimates stage.

(Para 3.6)

POLICY ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE COMMISSION

Composition and Staff Strength

9. The Committee is of the view that such persistent vacancies may adversely affect administrative efficiency and service delivery. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Commission should expedite the recruitment process in a time-bound manner to fill up the vacant posts and ensure optimal utilization of human resources so that the functioning of the Commission is not hampered due to manpower shortages.

(Para 3.9)

10. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Election Commission of India should put in place robust monitoring mechanisms at all levels to ensure uniform implementation of the revision process, while also ensuring strict adherence to data privacy and security protocols in respect of documents uploaded on the Election Commission Integrated Network (ECINET). These measures, in the view of the Committee, would help enhance transparency and strengthen public confidence in the integrity of the electoral rolls.

(Para 3.12)

11. The Committee recommends that the Election Commission of India may adopt a flexible and area-specific approach in the location and rationalisation of polling stations in remote, rural, tribal and hilly regions, while broadly adhering to the prescribed norms. The Commission may consider relaxing the norms in genuinely difficult terrains, taking into account geographical constraints, connectivity and voter convenience. The Committee further recommends that periodic accessibility assessments may be undertaken to identify hardship-prone areas so that no elector is effectively deprived of the opportunity to vote due to distance or terrain-related barriers.

(Para 3.14)

12. The Committee recommends that the Election Commission of India may examine the feasibility of introducing suitable technical and procedural measures to enhance voter convenience, including improved lighting or backlit display for EVMs, ensuring visual parity among election symbols, strengthening and verifying voter slip distribution mechanisms, and rationalising the establishment of polling stations so that no village is left without reasonable access to a polling booth. The Committee further recommends that the Commission may put in place a transparent and real-time system for dissemination of voter turnout data, with a view to minimising disputes and enhancing public confidence in the electoral process.

(Para 3.16)

13. The Committee, recommends that the Election Commission of India may consider adopting appropriate technological measures to strengthen the principle of “one person, one vote,” enhance transparency in the functioning of EVMs and VVPATs, facilitate the participation of migrant workers in the electoral process, and improve polling station infrastructure, so as to enhance voter confidence and accessibility.

(Para 3.18)

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