

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:164
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2001
FUNDING OF ELECTIONS
BHERU LAL MEENA;PRENEET KAUR

Will the Minister of LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Committee constituted in regard to Government funding on elections has submitted its report to the Government;
- (b) if so, the recommendations of this Committee; (
- (c) whether the Government have accepted the recommendations of the said Committee;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the aspects of various electoral reforms have been examined by the Government; and
- (f) if so, the details of electoral reforms the Government is likely to implement before the next general election?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE & COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Committee on State Funding of Elections (Indrajit Gupta Committee), which was constituted by the Government under the Chairmanship of late Shri Indrajit Gupta, M.P. pursuant to a decision taken in the meeting of leaders of political parties held on 22.5.1998, submitted its report to the Government on 14.1.1999 and the same has also been laid on the Table of the House on 25.8.2000. The recommendations of the Committee are under consideration of the Government.

(e) & (f) Yes, Sir. The Government is continuously exploring ways and means of bringing about reforms in electoral laws. In this connection, it may be stated that the Government has before it the recommendations made by different bodies/individuals like the Dinesh Goswami Committee, the Indrajit Gupta Committee, the Election Commission of India, the Law Commission of India, etc. and various proposals based on their recommendations are discussed with the political parties from time to time and concretized. The Government has already given notice for introduction of a new Bill, namely, the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2001, in the current session of the Council of States seeking to substitute open ballot system in place of the existing secret ballot system in elections to the Council of States and to do away with the requirement of residence of a particular State/Union territory for contesting election to the Council of States from that State/Union territory. Further, consequent to the passing of the Constitution (Ninety-first Amendment) Bill, 2001, seeking to extend the constitutional embargo on undertaking readjustment of electoral constituencies up to the year 2026 as also rationalization of the territorial constituencies, including those reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, based on the population census for the year 1991, without altering the number of seats allocated to States in the legislative bodies, which is awaiting ratification from the State legislatures before being assented to by the Hon'ble President, the Government will also bring forward a Delimitation Bill enabling setting up of an authority for carrying out the purposes of the said Bill. The process of reform of electoral laws is, however, a continuous and ongoing process and can be carried out only through consensus among political parties, which is a time consuming process and, therefore, no time frame can be suggested in this regard. The Government, however, intends to continue interaction with the political parties on various proposals to carry forward the process of electoral reforms.