JOINT COMMITTEE ON OFFICES OF PROFIT (SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

NINETEENTH REPORT

Presented to Lok Sabha on 28.03.2017

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 28.03.2017



सत्यमेव जयते

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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CONTENTS

PAGE

COMPOSITION OF THE JOINTCOMMITTEE ON OFFICES OF PROFIT	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)

REPORT

Nomination of senior most Member of Lok Sabha as Chairperson and other 01 Member(s) of Parliament (Lok Sabha) as Co-Chairperson(s) to the proposed 'District Electricity Committee' to monitor Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Schemes (IPDS) for rural and urban areas respectively in their concerned districts of Rajasthan.

APPENDICES

- APPENDIX I Extracts of the Minutes of Thirty Ninth sitting of the Joint 07 Committee on Offices of Profit (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) held on 04 November, 2016.
- APPENDIX II Extracts of the Minutes of the Forty First Sitting of the Joint 08 Committee on Offices of Profit (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) held on 25 November, 2016.
- **APPENDIX- III** Extract of the Minutes of the Forty third Sitting of the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) held on 23rd March, 2017.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON OFFICES OF PROFIT

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

\$ Dr. Satya Pal Singh

Chairperson

MEMBERS LOK SABHA

- 2. Shri T.G. Venkatesh Babu
- 3. Adv. Sharad Bansode
- 4. Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi
- 5 Shri Bhagwant Maan
- 6 Shri M.K. Raghavan
- 7. Prof. Saugata Roy
- 8. Smt. Supriya Sule
- #9. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
- #10. Shri Janardan Mishra

RAJYA SABHA

- 11. Shri Naresh Agrawal
- 12. Shri C.P. Narayanan
- 13. Shri Dilipbhai Pandya
- 14. Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Roy
- *15. Shri Sharad Yadav

SECRETARIAT

1.	Shri U.B.S. Negi	-	Joint Secretary
2.	Smt Rita Jailkhani	-	Director
3.	Smt. Maya Lingi	-	Additional Director
4.	Shri T.R. Nauriyal	-	Deputy Secretary
5.	Shri S.Lal Engzau Ngaihte	-	Committee Officer

^{\$} Appointed as Chairperson vide Bulletin Part-II dated 19.07.2016 (Para No.3780) vice Shri P.P. Chaudhary resigned from the Chairpersonship of the Committee w.e.f. 05.07. 2016

[#] Nominated as Member of the Committee vide Bulletin Part-II dated 02.08.2016 (Para No.3952) vice Shri P.P. Chaudhary and Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal resigned from the membership of the Committee consequent upon their appointment as Ministers w.e.f. 05.07.2016.

^{*} Shri Sharad Yadav nominated as Member of the Committee vide Bulletin Part-II dated 02.08.2016 (Para No. 3952).

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit, having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Nineteenth Report of the Committee.

2. At their sitting held on 04 November, 2016 and 25 November, 2016 the Committee examined the term, composition, character, functions, etc., of the proposed 'District Electricity Committee' (DEC), with a view to consider as to whether the Nomination of senior most Member of Lok Sabha as Chairperson and other Member(s) of Parliament (Lok Sabha) as co-Chairperson (s) to the proposed 'District Electricity Committee' to monitor Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Schemes (IPDS) for rural and Urban areas respectively in their concerned districts of Rajasthan would attract disqualification from the angle of 'Offices of Profit' under Article 102 (1) (a) of the Constitution of India.

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Report at their sitting held on 23rd March, 2017.

4. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Ministry of Power; Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) and Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department and Department of Legal Affairs) for furnishing the information desired by the Committee for detailed examination of the issues involved in the matter.

5. The Observations/Recommendations made by the Committee in respect of the matter considered by them are given at the end of this Report in bold letters.

NEW DELHI:

DR. SATYA PAL SINGH Chairperson, Joint Committee on Offices of Profit

<u>23 March, 2017</u> 2 Chaitra, 1938 Saka

REPORT

Subject : Nomination of senior most Member of Lok Sabha as Chairperson and other Member(s) of Parliament (Lok Sabha) as Co-Chairperson(s) to the proposed 'District Electricity Committee' to monitor Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Schemes (IPDS) for rural and urban areas respectively in their concerned districts of Rajasthan.

While referring to the letter dated 01.04.2015 of the Ministry of Power, Government of India, State Government of Rajasthan vide letter No.15(42)Energy/2014 dated 05.08.2015 has sought the approval of Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha regarding nomination of Senior most Member of Lok Sabha as Chairperson and other Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) as Co-Chairpersons to the proposed "District Electricity Committee' to monitor Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Schemes (IPDS) for rural and urban areas respectively in their concerned districts of Rajasthan.

2. Article 102(1)(a) of the Constitution of India reads as under:

"A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of either House of Parliament –

if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State, other than an office declared by Parliament by law not to disqualify its holder"

3. Parliament has passed a law, namely the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959 (Annexure-I) laying down which offices would not disqualify holders thereof from the membership of Parliament. This Act also provides that if a Chairman or director or member of any statutory or non-statutory body is not entitled to any remuneration other than the compensatory allowance, she/he would not incur disqualification for being chosen as, or for being, a member of Parliament. Under Section 2(a) of the said Act, "compensatory allowance" has been defined as any sum of "money payable to the holder of an office by way of daily allowance (such allowance not exceeding the amount of daily allowance to which a Member of Parliament Act, 1954) any conveyance allowance, house-rent allowance or travelling allowance for the purpose of enabling her/him to recoup any expenditure incurred by her/him in performing the functions of that office"

4. The expression "holds any office of profit under the Government" occurring in Article 102 (1)(a) and 191(1)(a) has nowhere been defined precisely. However, in order to determine whether an office held by a person is an office of profit under the Government, the Joint Committee on Office of Profit, in their Tenth Report (7th Lok Sabha), presented to Lok Sabha on 7 May, 1984, <u>(Annexure-II)</u> laid down the following guiding principles:-

"The broad criteria for the determination of the question whether an office held by a person is an office of profit have been laid down in judicial pronouncements. If the Government exercises control over the appointment to an dismissal from the office and over the performance and functions of the office and in case the remuneration or pecuniary gain, either tangible or intangible in nature, flows from such office irrespective of whether the holder for the time being actually receives such remuneration or gain or not, the office should be held to be an office of profit under the Government Otherwise, the object of imposition of the disqualification as envisaged in the Constitution will become frustrated. This first basic principle should be the guiding factor in offering positions to a member of the Legislature."

5. Keeping the above position in view, the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit, have been following the undernoted criteria to test the Committees, Commissions, etc. for deciding the question as to which of the offices should disqualify and which should not disqualify a person for being chosen as, and for being a Member of Parliament:-

- Whether the holder draws any remuneration, like sitting fee, honorarium, salary, etc. i.e. any remuneration other than the 'compensatory allowance' as defined in Section 2(a) of the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959;
 (The Principle thus is that if a member draws not more than what is required to cover the actual out of Pocket expenses and does not give him pecuniary benefit, it will not act as a disqualification)
- (iii) Whether the body in which an office is held, exercises executive, legislative or judicial powers or confers powers of disbursement of funds, allotment of lands, issue of licenses, etc., or gives powers of appointment, grant of scholarships, etc; and
- (iv) Whether the body in which an office is held enables the holder to wield influence or power by way of patronage.

If reply to any of the above criteria is in affirmative then the office in question will entail disqualification.

6. <u>Term of Office</u>, <u>Government Control and Allowances payable</u>

According to the Government of Rajasthan District Electricity Committee is a Standing Committee constituted as per the orders of Government of India. Its functions are advisory in nature. The term of Chairperson/Co-Chairperson will be continued till the Scheme is in operation. Further, the State Government does not exercise control over the appointment to and removal from the office and over the performance and functions of the office of Chairperson/Vice Chairperson. The nomination/election of Members of Parliament to the Committee does not confer any power(s) of disbursement of funds and allotment of land. The Committee also does not wield any influence or power by way of patronage. However, the Committee exercise executive powers. With regard to the expenses payable to the Member of Parliament as a Chairperson and Co-Chairperson/Member of the Committee, it is stated that as per the Scheme of DDUGJY and IPDS, no allowance/honorarium is allowed to the Member of Parliament as Chairperson or Co-Chairperson of the Committee. It is also stated that no facility is provided to the Hon'ble Member of Parliament as per DDUGJY Scheme.

7. During oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Power under taken on 04.11.2016, the Committee were informed that in August 2016, Department of Rural Development, vide their DO letter No.Q13016/1/2016-VMC dated August 27, 2016, shared a copy of Order and Guidelines of Constitution of District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA). After discussion and perusal in the Ministry, with the approval of Hon'ble Minister of Power, it was decided to get Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) schemes covered under the ambit of DISHA and to subsume DEC in DISHA. The same was, accordingly, informed to the Ministry of Rural Development vide their Ministry's OM No.42/17/2011-RE dated August 31, 2016. Consequently, District Electricity Committee (DEC) is no more in existence and subsumed in DISHA for which Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry.

8. Accordingly, the matter was taken up with the Ministry of Rural Development and in its response, the Ministry has informed the Committee that after due consultation with States and Central Ministries, the Department of Rural Development constituted the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) replacing the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee in June, 2016. The concerned Ministries were requested to examine the issue of inclusion of any other programme/scheme that they feel requires to be covered within the jurisdiction of the DISHA committee. Ministry of Power in its communication proposed that the Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Schemes (IPDs) to be included for monitoring by DISHA committee. It has also been added that District Electricity Committee (DEC) stands subsumed in DISHA as informed to them by the Ministry of Power.

According to the information furnished by the Ministry of Rural Development the Department of Rural Development has constituted the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) replacing the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee in June, 2016. DISHA is an Adhoc committee and dissolves with the dissolution of Lok Sabha. DISHA or erstwhile District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee has not been listed in the Schedule to the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959. DISHA is an effort to improve development coordination and monitoring within the Constitutional framework of responsibilities assigned to Central, State and Local Governments.

Composition of the Committee

9. The Committee has the following composition:-

"Chairperson:

The Chairperson of the DISHA should be a Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) elected from the district, nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development. Where there are more than one Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing the district, the senior-most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) should be nominated as the Chairperson. However, the Warrant of Precedence maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs should be followed, which may result in exceptions. If the district has more than one Parliamentary Constituency (Lok Sabha) as its segments and the senior-most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) is made Chairperson of DISHA in some other district, the next seniormost Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) should be the Chairperson. In case of same seniority, the Chairperson should be the Member of Parliament in whose Parliamentary Constituency the largest geographical area of the district falls.

Co-Chairperson:

The other Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing the district should be designated as Co-Chairpersons. One MP (Rajya Sabha) representing the State and exercising option to be associated with the district level Committee of that district (on first come basis), to be designated as Co-Chairperson by the Ministry of Rural Development. In case the MP from RS is senior following the Warrant of Precedence maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs, he / she may be made as Chairperson of the committee.

Member Secretary:

The Member Secretary of the DISHA should be the District Collector / District Magistrate/ Deputy Commissioner except in cases where specific exemption has been given by the Union Government.

Members:

The other Members of the committee should be as follows:

- (i) All Members of the State Legislative Assembly elected from the district.
- (ii) One representative of the State Government / UT Administration.
- (iii) All Mayors / at least the Chairpersons of Municipalities including one woman and five elected heads of Gram Panchayat including two women
- (iv) Chairperson of the Zilla Panchayat.
- (v) Head of the Autonomous District Council in districts having Schedule VI Areas.
- (vi) All Chairpersons of Intermediate Panchayats in the district.
- (vii) Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Panchayat.
- (viii) Project Director, DRDA/Poverty Alleviation Unit.

- (ix) One Member from a reputed NGO, to be nominated by the Chairperson and the other Members of Parliament in the Committee.
- (x) One representative each of SC, ST and Women to be nominated by the Chairperson and the other Members of Parliament in the Committee.
- (xi) Lead Bank officer of the district.
- (xii) Senior Superintendent/ Superintendent of the Postal Department.
- (xiii) District level nodal functionaries of all Programmes that will be under the purview of DISHA.

Thus, there are 50-60 members in the committee other than the Chairman and Co-chairman and co-chairman out of which 4 non-official members at sl. No. (ix) and (x) are nominated by the Chairperson and the other Members of Parliament in the committee.

10. The powers and functions of the committee are as detailed below:-

"Power: This Committee will have Coordination and Monitoring powers. Its role is to remove obstacles to timely completion of approved Projects. It will have powers in seeking effective follow up of issues raised during the deliberation.

Function: DISHA has been constituted with a view to fulfilling the objective of ensuring a better coordination among all the elected representatives in Parliament, State Legislatures and Local Governments (Panchayati Raj Institutions/Municipal Bodies) for efficient and time-bound development of districts. These Committees could monitor the implementation of the programmes in accordance with prescribed procedures and guidelines and promote synergy and convergence for greater impact."

11. When the Committee asked about the nature of the functions of the Committee (DISHA) as to whether the same are advisory in nature or otherwise, the Ministry of Rural Development in its written reply stated as under:-

"District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) is being formed with a view to fulfilling the objective of ensuring a better coordination among all the elected representatives in Parliament, State Legislatures and Local Governments (Panchayati Raj Institutions/Municipal Bodies) for efficient and time-bound development of districts. These Committees could monitor the implementation of the programmes in accordance with prescribed procedures and guidelines and promote synergy and convergence for greater impact. **The work of committee is advisory in nature.**" 12. According to the Ministry of Rural Development, the Committee (DISHA) does not exercise any executive, legislative or judicial powers and as per DISHA Guidelines, no amount is payable to the Member of Parliament.

13. During the course of oral evidence undertaken by the Committee on 25.11.2016, the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) briefed the Committee as under:-

"......Sir, the context was that the Government in the month of August took a decision to set up superseding the District Vigilance and Monitoring which was there earlier primarily for rural development Committee The Government took a conscious decision to set up the programmes. District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee which in short was referred to as the DISHA Committee headed by Hon. Members of Parliament. On 31st August, 2016, the Ministry of Power issued an office memorandum where they set up District Electricity Committee, which is now subsumed under the DISHA. As the name suggests, it is a Development, Coordination and Monitoring Committee. Hon. Members of Parliament would be fully aware of the role that it plays. Even in drafting of the DISHA Committee guidelines, care, was taken that constitutional provisions are fully respected. It was vetted by the Ministry of Law as well to ensure that Central sectors, State sectors and local Government programmes, the development, coordination, where Hon. Members of Parliament are there as Chairpersons, Members of Legislative Assemblies, Zila Parishad Adhyaksh, the Chairpersons of urban local bodies were all part of the Committee. In the list of 28 schemes mentioned the suggestion was that this Committee could coordinate by holding, at least, four meetings every year under DISHA. In the way it is constituted, especially, in the context of the office of profit issues, very clearly this is the Committee where the Hon. Member is nominated to Chair it. There are no payments made for this. It is not a permanent standing It has superseded the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee. Committee which was not in the list of an office of profit related committees, etc.

The objective of this Committee is development, coordination and monitoring. Apart from the 28 flagship programmes of the Government, any other programmes which need to be monitored by the DISHA as and when felt necessary could be included by the Hon. Chairman so that the MPs, MLAs, the members of the Zila Parishad, all of them together could ensure that programmes are implemented on time and ensure that all the constraints that may be there through a better coordination and monitoring could be taken care of. So, clearly the objective of this Committee is only a Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee."

14. When the Committee pointed out about the contradiction in the submission of the Ministry regarding payment of allowance and remuneration to the members of DISHA, the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) clarified as follows:-

"Sir, as has, been clarified in the order of the DISHA Committee itself, upto Rs.2 lakh has been allowed for the conduct of the Meeting but it has also very clearly specified what it can be paid for.

It says clearly the non-official members of DISHA should be entitled for reimbursement of expenditure on local travel within the district for attending the meetings."

15. When the Committee further pointed out about Daily Allowance being allowed to non-official members at the DA rate applicable to Group 'A' officers of the State Governments, the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) explained as under:-

"Sir, this is not paid to Hon. Members of Parliament in this Committee, there are non-Governmental representatives also."

16. When the Committee observed that non-official members, technically mean all the Members of Parliament, the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) stated as under:-

"Sir, we will rectify that further. But I just wanted to clarify, we do not make payments to Hon'ble MPs from this. As you will find, the membership of the Committee, there are some non-official members."

The representatives further assured that they will rectify and stand corrected on the matter.

17. On being pointed out by the Committee that co-ordination and monitoring powers, strictly speaking, are executive powers, and not advisory in nature, the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) clarified as under:-

"Sir, I would clarify the point. This is an advisory body. The reason why I mentioned development, coordination and monitoring is that we have been attempting to make it a more effective medium. We do upload the minutes of the DISHA Committee meeting on our website also The reason for doing it is, the executive function which has to do with approval of either finances or programmes are not done by this Committee at all. All that this Committee does is to oversee all the approved projects like giving optic fibres connectivity to a village whether the scheme is really executed or not. The Committee also reviews what is to be done if the projects were not properly implemented."

18. On the issue of nature of function of DISHA, the representatives of the Ministry of Law & Justice (Legislative Department) stated as under:-

"Sir, we have not received the response of the administrative Ministry, we do not have any paper. Just we listen about it and as Madam Lekhi rightly pointed out that it is advisory in nature and only supervisory in function so with that only, I can comment that Members who are appointed to this Committee may not be disqualified. They are not disqualified. But we cannot examine without any papers. We do not have any response of the administrative ministry. No copy was circulated to us. "

19. On being questioned by the Committee that IPDS is not mentioned in the list of schemes covered by DISHA, the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development (*Department of Rural Development) responded as under:-

"As I mentioned, the original letter that we issued, it had mentioned 28 items, then we sent it to the concerned Departments. That if they wanted to add anything, we have received a letter from the Ministry of Power to add IPDS, we are doing that."

20. Section 3 (i) of the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959 reads as under:-

"<u>Section 3</u> "Certain offices of profit not to disqualify - It is hereby declared that none of the following offices, in so far as it is an office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State, shall disqualify the holder thereof for being chosen as, or for being, a Member of Parliament, namely :-

XX XX XX XX

(i) the office of chairman, director or member of any statutory or nonstatutory body other than any such body as is referred to in clause (h), if the holder of such office is not entitled to any remuneration other than compensatory allowance, but excluding (i) the office of chairman of any statutory or non-statutory body specified in Part I of the Schedule, (ii) the office of chairman or secretary of any statutory or non-statutory body specified in Part II of the Schedule;"

Observations/Recommendations

21. The Committee note that the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) constituted the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) replacing the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee in June, 2016. DISHA dissolves with the dissolution of Lok Sabha. DISHA or erstwhile District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee has not been listed in the schedule to the Parliament (Prevention of Disgualification) Act, Deendayal Updhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated 1959. Power Development Scheme (IPDS) are covered under the ambit of DISHA. Consequently, District Electricity Committee (DEC) is no more in existence and stands subsumed in DISHA. DISHA has been constituted with a view to fulfilling the objective of ensuring a better coordination among all the elected representatives of Parliament, State Legislatures and Local Governments for efficient and time bound development of districts. The committee monitor the implementation of the programmes in accordance with prescribed procedures and guidelines and promote synergy and convergence for greater impact. The work of committee is advisory in nature.

22. As per DISHA guidelines, the Chairperson of DISHA is a Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from the district nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development. Where there are more than one Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha representing the district, the senior-most Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha shall be nominated as Chairperson. In case of same seniority, the Chairperson should be the Member of Parliament in whose Parliamentary constituency the largest geographical area of the district falls. The other Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing the district are designated as Co-Chairpersons. One Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) representing the State exercising option to be associated with the district level committee of that district (on first come basis) is designated as Co-Chairperson by the Ministry of Rural Development. In case, the Member of Parliament from Rajya Sabha is senior following the Warrant of Precedence maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs, he/she is made as Chairperson of the committee.

23. The Committee were informed in writing that as per DISHA guidelines, no amount is paid to the Member of Parliament as a Chairperson or Co-Chairpersons of the committee. However, the Committee note that as per para 9 (a) of the DISHA guidelines, non-official members of DISHA is entitled for reimbursement of expenditure on local travel with in the district for attending the meetings as applicable to Group A officers of the State. Further, para 9(b) of these guidelines stipulates that daily allowance be allowed to non-official members at the State Government DA rate applicable for Group A officers of the State. Thus, the submission of the Department is not in conformity with the provisions of the guidelines of DISHA. During the course of evidence, the Secretary of the Department clarified that remuneration is paid to the non-Governmental representatives and not to the Members of Parliament. However, the Committee were of the view that Members of Parliament are non-

officials and therefore, they would be entitled for the remuneration as per the provisions of the guidelines of DISHA, but the same is not in accordance with the provisions of section 2(a) of the Act of 1959 which defines 'compensatory allowance'. The Committee, therefore, recommend that provisions of para 9((a) and b) of the guidelines may be rectified suitably as also assured by the Secretary of the Department during the course of the evidence.

24. The Committee also note that the IPDS is not listed in the programmes to be covered by Disha. In this regard, the Secretary of the Department informed the Committee that the same is being added in the list as per the letter received by them from the Ministry of Power. The Committee hope that the immediate action will be initiated by the Department to update the said list accordingly.

25. The Committee also note that as per section 3(i) of the Act of 1959, the office of Chairman, Director or member of any statutory and non-statutory bodies are exempted from incurring disqualification if the holder of such office is not entitled to any remuneration other than compensatory allowance. The Committee are, therefore, of the considered opinion that nomination of Members of Parliament as Chairperson or Co-Chairpersons to the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) may not entail disqualification under Article 102(1)(a) of the Constitution of India provided that they are not entitled for any remuneration other than compensatory allowance as defined under section 2(a) of the Act of 1959.

DR. SATYAPAL SINGH Chairperson, Joint Committee on Offices of Profit

New Delhi <u>March, 2017</u> Phalguna, 1938 (Saka)