

Presentation and Discussions
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. The Members of the National Assembly of Thailand, like any Member of Parliament in others of the world's parliaments, in face with the very critical task of making the laws which secure the freedom, protection, well being and destiny of "the people". In order for the National Assembly to be an effective partner in the National Government of Thailand, its members must have accurate, current information as well as technical, procedural, and other facilitative assistance on a timely basis. The provision of such services, of course, rests on the commitment and capabilities of the officials and staffs of the Secretariat.

The Needs of Members of Parliament for Information Service

We have surveyed the needs of Members of Parliament which are summarized as follows :

1. They satisfied with provision of data they request but also need analytical data for the purpose of bringing into practice.
2. They need urgent and updated data.

3. They need the development of Parliamentary Library.
4. They need the provision of data for supporting the work of committees and the need of organizing legislative data by parliamentary itself.
5. They need the introduction of computer to implement information service.
6. They need the coordination of external data.

Research and Information support to Legislature

The most serious problems, we are facing now, are the over - burden of responsibilities and unexperienced officials and limited of personnel.

Only fundamental data that can be used for consideration in the first reading of bill had been provided. Data needed to be used in the stage of committee consideration is limited and the need to use government agencies's data is essential. The agency in providing legislative information services should have the role of providing research data and supporting of those who are expertises in research.

Documentation and Reference Services Center as well as Research and Legislative Services Center are the main bodies of the National Assembly of Thailand in supporting information and data for Members of Parliament. The core activities of the research and information service in serving the MPs are comprised of 6 items.

1. Gathering data for arranging background papers, it is the paper of informations for the bills or motions that will be considered in sitting.

The process of data collection and background paper preparation of each subject are under the time - limit of 5 or 6 day starting from Tuesday the day by which the agenda of the next week is set. This can be ranged from classifying bills into various fields and assigning to the field specialists studying the main point of each bill; outlining the paper in consistent with the bill's purpose; finding documents and collecting data from the Parliamentary Library, government agencies and the organizations concerned, as well as any other data sourecs; analyzing the accuracy and possibility of the data; writing the paper; reviewing for accuracy of the paper typing the manuscripts for off - set printing; and distributing to the members of the House of Representative study before the Conference. This whole process have to be done within 6 days.

2. Providing facts and data of the issues.

Paper of Info - Pack, it is prepared for facilities of the MPs to abtain information rapidly and promptly.

3. Providing data as requested, the need for this service has been so rapidly increased that all specialists are overloaded with the members' requests. The process of subjects fact finding is exactly the same as previously described except that it does not need to make copies by off set printings. Time limits for each fact finding subject is ranging from 2 to 10 days.

Sometimes, it cannot be done in time needed because of the insufficiency of data elsewhere.

4. Providing documents of Parliamentary Library.

The services provided by professional staffs are relevant. Parliamentary Library supplies various field of books documents, government reports and statistic, Parliamentary verbatim records as well as do interlibrary services to both Professional staff and the MPs.

Librarian of Parliamentary Library face the problems of providing perfect services to their increasing clientels. Their in - hand data and documents sum to be insufficient in the comparison with the incremental needs. The acceleration of data collecting and indexing, wide - range of newspapers clipping and Union - cataloguing are necessary.

Beyond the task of regular library services, we are able to provide further more beneficial services to the MPs. They are as follows :

- Circulating the Mps with pamphlets on new books with annotation and contents of new periodical for each month

- Briefing any news concern with political aspects within the country in two weeks.

- Providing newspaper clipping, separated for the House each committees, which is a useful hint for the committee meetings.

- Publishing all fundamental fact for any MPs or committees, in order to follow up with various, current, public - interest issues. They are as follows :

1. "Issues Brief" a technical document contains highlight and any significant matters.

2. "Fact & Figure" for the collection of fundamental and background of some certain matters.

5. Publishing dissemination paper of parliament such as:

- The parliamentary newsletter is bi - weekly issued
- The parliamentary Journal is monthly issued.
- Issued concerned Thai parliament and its

activities.

6. Providing assistance in drafting bills, motions and questions are in the responsibility of Research and Legislative Services Center, providing assistance with respect to drafting the principle of the bill and the reasons for submitting the bill or the amendment, as well as drafting the reasons for presenting question to Ministers.

Improvement on Information Service

1. At present, due to high technology in data collection and the exchanging of data by on - line system, the Secretariat of the National Assembly had introduced computer system to improve existing data collecting system which started using in many sections of the Secretariat of the National Assembly. The Computer Center will be coordinator for this purpose. Documentation and Reference Services Center including Parliamentary Library has now seven micro computers organizing easy data such as list of specialist in any branch, sources

of data for each subject, history of law, biography of Members of Parliament, data base of books in Library and index for law which consisted of micro - graphic CAR system. (CAR = Computer Assisted Retrieval)

Presently Documentation and Reference Services Center has initiated on - line system of data between government sectors and data centers such as

1. Technical Information Access Center (TIAC).
2. Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) Library.
3. Data from Ministry of Commerce.
4. Data from Department of Science Service.

This program is the coordination between Parliamentary Library and the Research and Reference Services Section. We hope the program to be extended to most of government offices.

At the same time. Documentation and Reference Services Center has provided information service to outsiders or government sectors such as ; biography of Members of Parliament, List of Committees, list of the stage of consideration of bill and abstract of laws of which is useful for the development of research if succeeded.

Anyway, the problems of such coordination is that those sectors can provide data that is only related to their sectors. Therefore, other sectors can not efficiently make use of these data. There are no standards among the government agencies, so all the data are isolated and cannot be integrated to have some coherent meaning.

2. Buying data from private sectors. Parliamentary Library is proposing to buy New clipping from private sectors which can be provided within 8.00 A.M. every day. Parliamentary Library then copies and circulates to committees and the Research and Reference Service Section that will be useful for implementation of Members of Parliament.

3. Coordination with committees. In order to meet the need and target of committees, Documentation and Reference Services Center has received permission to send its staffs to attend the meeting. Those staffs not only to follow up Issues from outside seminars and submit to the committee but also to follow up the implementation of committee assigned.

4. At present, we still have no research service, however the Secretariat of the National Assembly has enough budget to hire specialists to make research for committees which select topics by themselves.

The development of information service of Thai Parliament has been slowly proceeded and sometimes halted because of instability of legislative institute and coup d's etat. However, it is the halt to stride steadily like the information service. In the occassion of being attended the second meeting of APLAP, we hope all participants exchange successful tactics and technics of information service that will be useful for implementing Members of Parliament in Asia - Pacific region.
