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**RESOURCES AND INFORMATION
SHARING OF LEGISLATION**

**BY
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PARLIAMENT :

The bicameral Parliament of Pakistan consists of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly is composed of 217 members elected for 5 years. There is no bar on the women to contest against any general seat which are 207. Ten seats are reserved for non-Muslim minorities members.

The Senate consists of 87 members, of whom 14 each are elected by Pakistan's four Provincial Assemblies; 8 members from the Federally Administered Tribal Area and 3 from the Federal Capital are elected by the Members National Assembly to represent Ulema (Muslim Theologians and Scholars), Technocrats and other professionals. The term of Senators is 6 years, one half of them retiring every 3 years. In March this year elections for half of them were held.

COMMITTEES :

After the General Elections in October, 1993, thirty four standing committees of the National Assembly have been constituted. These committees are for various ministries and divisions. The committee on House and Library has 11 members including Dy. Speaker as Ex-Officio Chairman. Finance Committee of the National Assembly has 10 members with Speaker National Assembly as its Chairman and Finance Minister as ex-Officio member. Beside these 34 Committees, the House can also constitute Special Committees or Select Committee. The Senate of Pakistan has 12 standing committees.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LIBRARY 1947-85 :

The National Assembly Library began with a small collection of books and documents received as Pakistan's share from the Library of the Indian Legislature in August 1947. By 1966, the Library's collection had grown to about 40,000 volumes.

However, when the National Assembly was shifted to Dhaka, only 10,000 books and publications were left in Rawalpindi. Unfortunately no materials could be retrieved from Dhaka on the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

The National Assembly Library in Rawalpindi/Islamabad was gradually re-built subject to the availability of funds and accommodation. The Library also subscribed some of the English and Urdu newspapers of the country, alongwith a few domestic and foreign journals.

By the end of 1984, there were 22,000 books entered in the Library's Accessions Register. Unfortunately, due to lack of space, newspapers and periodicals could not be retained as part of the permanent collections.

Soon after the National Assembly started functioning in March 1985, Members expressed the need for improved Library services. In response, the Assembly's leadership decided that steps should be taken to enlarge the Library's collections.

It was felt that approximately 100,000 books and a much larger number of domestic and foreign newspapers and periodicals were required in order to meet the Members requirements for information on significant national and international developments. In addition, there was a critical need to expand the Library's reference services and to introduce research assistance on important legislation and major policy issues.

Presently the Library has a collection of 50,000 books. The Library subscribes to 125 foreign/local newspapers and journals. Most of the collection has been built up by purchase, and over the past four years, by donation. However, Library has exchange relations with some other Parliaments and receives Parliamentary documents. The Library welcomes the donations and exchange of publications in English language only.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 1985-94 :

Since adequate technical know-how and funding for a library modernization programme were not readily available, the National Assembly, with the concurrence of the Economic Affairs Division Government of Pakistan, approached The Asia Foundation for assistance in developing a modern Library and Research Service. On a grant basis, The Foundation committed \$283,500 for a three-year period for the expansion project. This was in addition to the annual budgetary allocations earmarked for the Library acquisition namely Rs.300,000 (U.S. \$16,500) for 1986-87, and Rs.600,000 (U.S. \$33,000) for 1987-88, Rs.10,00,000 for 1988-89 (U.S. \$50,000), Rs.10,00,000 (U.S. \$50,000) for 1989-90.

As a first step, a Library Consultant from the Library of Congress was engaged by The Asia Foundation to undertake a detailed study of the National Assembly's requirements and to formulate a plan for the development of Library. A comprehensive proposal was submitted to the Speaker.

After thorough consideration by the Speaker, and the House and Library committee, the proposal was accepted in principle.

The Library Consultant's service were engaged for a two-year period, commencing in November 1986, which was later extended for two years (upto Sept. 1990), to guide the development programme. During the summer of 1986, The Asia Foundation made its first

instalment of aid in the expansion of the Library by donating subscriptions to several major foreign newspapers and journals and an up-to-date reference collection for the Members Reading Room in the new Parliament Building.

INFORMATION RESOURCES :

The Library provides bibliographical aid and reference service to members, both in the House and in the Committees. The Library does not issue any reference books to any one and they can only be made use of in the Library. Similarly, newspapers and magazines are also not on the issue list. Other books are issued to the Members upto three books at a time.

SERIAL PUBLICATIONS :

About 130 serial publications including newspapers are received in the Library. Important journals, which are likely to be used by the Members are received in the Library. Copies of some of the important journals are obtained if required, on loan from the United States Information Centre and the British Council.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS :

The Federal and Provincial Gazettes are being regularly received in the Library. Efforts are made to get copies of other publications issued by the Ministries and Divisions and when brought out by them.

CURRENT AWARENESS :

Our newspaper clipping service both for Mr. Speaker and Research centre provides quick day to day information.

BORROWING AND LENDING :

Except for the reference books, a Member is entitled to borrow 3 books at a time for fifteen days.

PHOTO COPY SERVICE :

Provided free of charge for Members for all Parliamentary business.

ACQUISITIONS LIST :

Circulated to Members to inform them of new material acquired by the Library.

EXCHANGE OF PUBLICATIONS :

We have established exchange relations with other Parliaments and Independent Bodies to supplement our information needs. Our Parliamentary Publications are used as a basis for this exchange both internationally and nationally.

PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE :

In April 1988, the former Library was transformed into a bonafide Library and Research service with the addition of four new positions for professional Research Officers.

To enhance the staff's skills, the Librarian and four Research Officers have been sent on study tours to selected National Legislatures in Europe, North America, Canada, Asia and Australia. The Study tours are part of the Asia Foundation's grant of assistance to the project.

The four Research Officers assist the Members in consideration of important questions* or issues before the National Assembly. They prepare Background papers and Brief on non-Partisan basis, while considerable time may be invested in their preparation. They provide analysis of issues and advice on policy matters to Members either individually or in groups. The response may be supplied orally or in the form of written papers, notes or points. The service is both personal and confidential. They also prepare Research Papers on important National/International Issues for distribution among the Members. The Research Officers are Subject Specialist in: Economics; International Relations; Law & Shariah and Politics.

(sha-reah)

In June 1988, the modernization project was further assisted when the National Assembly, with the concurrence of the Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan, received as \$250,000 grant of assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for the procurement of various equipment. Under the USAID grant, a Xerox-1075 photo-copier was installed in the Library. This high-speed, high-volume copier has the capacity of producing 70,000 photo-copy images monthly.

The Xerox-1075 greatly enhances the Library and Research Service's ability to provide timely information service. In addition to the immediate servicing of Member's requests for newspaper and journal articles from the Library's distribution to Members and the Research Officer's reports, a current awareness service, and working copies of the Daily Proceedings of Debates.

In July 1988, the Service acquired five pieces of Kodok Microform equipment, as part of the USAID grant. This equipment (which includes a Microfilm/Microfiche camera, Film Processor, Duplicator, Jacket filler, and Reader/Printer) enables the Library to index and preserve as well as to integrate into an on-line information data base selected materials from newspapers,

journals, and documents. The Debates from 1947 to 1985 has now been transferred to microfiche. With the shortage of both space and staff, it provides the means for the efficient, permanent storage of such material and for the rapid retrieval of information from the sources.

The major portion of the USAID grant has been utilised for a pilot project to develop an integrated information management system for the National Assembly. A DEC MICROVAX-II mini-computer system (along with four micro-computers, five video display terminals, laser printers, and four dot-matrix printers) has been procured.

The Libraries of The National Assembly, Senate and four Provincial Assemblies have fully been automated. CDSISIS Software of UNESCO with certain modification made by the Pakistan highly Association has been adopted by the all the six Libraries of the Legislatures. The software package integrated the primary functions of the Library. It allows the Library users to identify and locate information by subject, author, or title, irrespective of the form in which the information was published or its location in the Library's collections.

Enhancements to the system will be made as additional hardware can be procured and technical staff are hired. New positions have been authorised, one System Analyst, two computer Programmers, a Manager for Word Processing/Operations, and six Data Entry Operators have been recruited.

The computer system will also be used to produce and index the daily Proceedings of Debates with a bilingual Urdu-English word-processing package. Two of the micro-computers were dedicated for this purpose as part of the pilot project. The final part of the pilot project, linked to the indexing of the Proceedings, is the development of a specialised data file to

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 is the
 CDSISIS system
 available for use by
 any user or
 staff by
 library

crack the rulings of the Chair. One Scanners has also been added to the Library and Research Service for feeding the written material directly from books/journals to the computers. This will save a lot of valuable time.

It is anticipated that the Libraries of the Provincial Assemblies will be linked electronically with the National Assembly Library to form a national legislative information system in the near future. The Senate Library will be linked this summer. In due course, other major Pakistani research Libraries may also become participants in a CDS ISIS based network, as the development of national telecommunication capabilities permits.