



Meeting Specialist



**Chairmanship and
Parliamentary Procedures**

Sunil Kumar R

International Director 2012-2014
Lions Clubs International

An initiative of MD 316, Lions Clubs International





30 Years of Training Trainers and Leaders on Personal Effectiveness, People Management and Presentation Skills - is his hallmark. Sunil's Leadership to organizations and industry association is well recognized. His vast experience of handling active audience at meetings & conferences and his energetic debates helped Sunil's growth as a Trainer, Leader and an established Parliamentarian.

Sunil conducted hundreds of sessions on Chairmanship And Parliamentary Procedures (CAPP). His effective approach to "deliberations" and his acumen on "Parliamentary Procedures" resulted in his articles, manuals and handbook on the subject.

Sunil offers this useful handbook on CAPP to all those who are keen to master the skill as a "Meeting Specialist". It makes it easier for groups who get into a deadlock at a meeting on procedures and often consult him.

Sunil is the International Director of Lions Clubs International. He earlier led Junior Chamber International (Jaycees) as its World Executive Vice President and also served as the National President of Indian Jaycees. His impressive portfolio forms an extra-ordinary testimony of his rare skills.

A Qualified Trainer Sunil conducted over 1150 programs in 15 Countries and has an alumni of over 450 trainers whom he coached. Lead Author of books on "Broadband Your Benchmarks"; "Unlocking Uncertainties"; "Success ~ No matter what". Sunil is a Consultant Trainer to several corporates.

Meeting Specialist

Chairmanship and Parliamentary Procedures

(An important guide to effective Chairmanship
& active participation at Meetings)

Author

Sunil Kumar R

International Director 2012-2014

Lions Clubs International

Past World Executive Vice President, (1952)

Jaycees International (JCI)

Past National President, Indian Jaycees (1989-90)

Past District Governor, (2008-09)

Lions Clubs International, District 324 C2

Qualified Trainer & Author

An initiative of MD 316, Lions Clubs International

The book compiles experiences and approaches that can help conduct meetings in an organized way. It is a useful guide to all Chairmen and active members of associations to support and encourage debates on subjects put up for discussions and decisions. The content is advisory and for all final conclusions one may refer to "Roberts Rules of Order – Revised Edition". It is a non-commercial publication created to promote meeting specialists all over.

Chairmanship and Parliamentary Procedures (CAPP)

For Voluntary Organizations

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Lions Clubs International, Multiple District 316: 2012-2013
to help Lion Leaders acquire skills
on effective Chairmanship;
Parliamentary Procedures and Management of Meetings**

Preface

“Mr. Chairman, Sir – Point of Order” – These words still linger in my mind, as I heard this comment in my early days of participating in Conferences. When someone uttered statements like these or *“Point of Privilege”*; or said *“I propose the Adjournment of the Meeting”* and goes on to say, *“This is no way to drag the meeting into this late hour – we must immediately adjourn the meeting”*. I was stunned. I noticed the “power” in a participating member, to control a meeting or draw the attention of the Chairman, no matter how small or how large the audience. Not only are such deliberations interesting and educative, but even the silent audience is excited.

Meetings make organizations. When meetings are held in an orderly manner and offer opportunities to debate, there is tremendous learning for all. Meetings must encourage participation by members and help decision making. Members must take home the benefit from meetings.

Chairmanship and Parliamentary Procedures is a subject that is extremely interesting. Parliamentary Procedures support Orderly Meetings. In my experience of having chaired and debated at several large meetings and conventions, frequent usage and disposal of debates using Parliamentary Procedures played a vital role in supporting my overall development and helped me to hone my communication skill. Active deliberations or debates can be interesting and educative even for spectators.

When meetings are held regularly and offer learning to members, the attendance at all meetings (Club, District or Multiple) will be encouraging. Effective deliberations support development of member’s communication skills. Orderly meetings add value and respect to the organization.

To encourage as many members to participate effectively and to guide them emerge as Meeting Specialists, this hand book on Parliamentary Procedures is published. Most of its contents, especially in guiding various situations that come up, are based on situations that have been experienced.

The objective of this book is to get members involved and to inspire conduct of orderly meetings. It is my firm belief, that those who master these procedures will be more regular in their participation. Over a period of time, such participative members evolve into excellent communicators and into prominent Leaders who display amazing confidence.

Do apply Parliamentary Procedures at all meetings. Once you get used to these procedures, you can't do without them. It is a fantastic opportunity to learn.

Should you need to be further clarified on any of its contents or to resolve a possible conflict, you may refer the "Roberts Rules of Order" (Most recent revised edition)

Here's wishing you every success in your shaping up and great times at meetings.

Sunil Kumar R

International Director (2012-2014)

Lions Clubs International

sunilkindia@gmail.com

Message

Multiple Council Chairman - MD 316

It gives me immense pleasure to share my opinion on the “Meeting Specialist” – A hand-book compiled by our International Director Lion Sunil Kumar. Of my close association and keen observation in recent times, I find in our International Director Sunil Kumar, a rare personality with implicit passion towards the organization. He always speaks on ‘we are who we want to be.’ ‘Be’ takes priority over ‘known’. Here is a leader who not only professes knowledge but practices what he speaks.

We are fortunate to have this authentic hand-book on Chairmanship and Parliamentary Procedures titled as “Meeting Specialist” authored by ID Lion Sunil Kumar on which he established himself. He inspired thousands of leaders across the Globe on this subject. For all those who want to refer this subject, “Meeting Specialist” is a ready reckoner.

This is a maiden effort in the history of our Multiple and perhaps in the India to promote members as meeting specialists. I wish and pray that this book be a great torch to all the emerging leaders. Lion Sunil toiled hard to bring this up and it is now in our hands to make best use of it. Once again my heartfelt thanks on behalf of our Multiple to our International Director Lion Sunil Kumar for his efforts despite his busy schedule. My best wishes to all the leaders who intend to emerge as “Meeting Specialists”

In the cause of lionism

Lion D.V.S.Raju (Ramesh)

Multiple Council Chairperson

Chairmanship & Parliamentary Procedures

Introduction

Organizations or Associations are driven by programs that are conducted often and invite active participation of its members. When there are no programs or meetings that offer opportunities for members to get involved, it is obvious that such organizations are short lived or turn ineffective.

An important goal for every organization is to ensure active involvement of its members – to help members accomplish expectations of membership. The best take home for any member is to experience learning; to express better and to reflect greater preparedness in Life.

Meetings “make” organizations. Meetings are pivotal to a member's involvement. Unless meetings are held regularly and encourage members participation, backed by a democratic decision making process, the strength of an organization is not established. It has been found that active involvement of members is directly proportional to their level of participation in meetings. When a member gets to speak or to propose or to debate or to contest or to vote; his/her involvement becomes that much more effective and the commitment grows.

In order to establish proper procedures at meetings of voluntary organizations that follow a democratic set up, “Chairmanship & Parliamentary Procedures” have evolved as an important tool to enable effective participation. These procedures facilitate orderly discussions. It is a rare skill that a member is offered to master. History reflects that hundreds of members who are vocal, strategic and participative have emerged as successful leaders, outstanding communicators and an important resource for their organization. Chairmanship and Parliamentary Procedures are essential guidelines for “successful and orderly meetings”. They offer excellent learning to the members and rewards their participation. A member who masters “Parliamentary Procedures” will last a lifetime and be ever willing to lead the discussions and offer Leadership.

The subject is covered under two verticals. One is all about Chairmanship – Duties/Responsibilities of a “Chairman” and the “Parliamentary Powers of a Chairman”. The other vertical is on the “Parliamentary Procedures”, its ground rules, various motions and their impact on orderliness in meetings.

Chairman of a Meeting / Assembly

The Chairman or Chairperson is the person who is authorized to preside over a meeting. He or She is also referred to as the Presiding Officer. Chairmanship is a formal Leadership authority that is conferred on a person either by virtue of the office held or by an election by the members on the floor of the respective assembly (Meeting).

In most cases, the presiding officer is the President or the Chairman, when it is the meeting of the General Body of a Club or of the Board of Directors. Most committees or groups of people, who are led by a Chairman, have such a person as the presiding officer for their meetings.

“Chairperson” is a modified title for “Chairman”. It is perfectly correct to address a lady presiding over a meeting or an assembly as “Madam Chairman”. Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairman is a commonly used term. We witness more women in leadership roles today. However, “Madam Chairman” got evolved into “Chairperson”, though “Madam Chairman” is also appropriate.

One important guideline, for every participating member, is to use the most appropriate terminology. Learning is Fun, when you learn these correct expressions and it compliments your deliberations with quality.

*Meetings “make” Organizations.
Meetings are pivotal to a member's involvement. Unless meetings are held regularly and unless they encourage members participation, backed by a democratic decision making process, the strength of an organization is not established.*

Important Expressions / Terms / Vocabulary used in Parliamentary Procedures (In alphabetical order)

Here are some important terms that are frequently referred to. One must master these terms to reflect quality deliberation. It is a good feeling to use these terms, since their appropriate usage, supports the image building of the speaker.

- a) **“Ab-initio”**: This means from the very beginning : For instance, when the motion being discussed is void or out of order, it can be suggested that the motion is Void “Ab-initio” (Right from the time it is proposed, the motion cannot be discussed and hence all decisions arising therefrom are Void Ab-initio)
- b) **Adjourn** : Adjourn, denotes closure of the meeting. “I Adjourn the Meeting or Conference” is what the Chairman is encouraged to rule, to close the meeting. “The meeting is hereby adjourned” is another form.
- c) **Adjournment sine-die**: (sine-die is a Latin word meaning without “any date”). This is an adjournment of a meeting without assigning a date for a further meeting. It is normally used by national and state assemblies whose terms or mandates are coming to an end and it is anticipated that this particular body will not meet again. However, any meeting that has been so adjourned can always be reconvened and the process of reconvening may vary depending on the bye-laws of the association.
- d) **Agenda** : Agenda or Business of a meeting is “transacted” (conducted).
- e) **Agenda – Its Adoption**: Agenda is the business to be “transacted” at a meeting. It is not only the content of the meeting but the order of the meeting. Unless, the constitution or bye-laws prescribe the “Agenda”, any agenda circulated is only a “proposed” one and becomes binding when “adopted” by the assembly. It is always advisable at such meetings, where Agenda is not prescribed by the Bye-Laws to have an item “Adoption of Agenda”. A member can move to amend the proposed agenda by adding any item the member desires or by proposing any other change.

- f) **Assembly** : “Assembly” is often used to define the “house” that transacts business. It can be a meeting of the General Body or of the Board of Directors or of a group of members presided over by a Chairman.
- g) **Carried Motion** : The motion is “carried” or “Adopted”, when passed by the required majority. “carried” is the more appropriate version to suggest that the motion/proposal before the assembly is approved by the assembly. “Motion is adopted”, is also accepted. The Chairman can take a vote by asking “all those in favour may say YES. After determining the numbers, he must say “All those against may say NO. It is the right of a Chairman to determine the abstaining members by asking “those abstaining may raise their hands”. The Chairman gives a ruling based on the majority vote. The Chairman can, alternatively, ask members to “raise hands” instead of a “Yes or No” response.
- h) **Chairman** : Encourage the usage of “Mr. Chairman” or “Madam Chairman” to address the presiding officer of a meeting. It can also be “Mr. President or Madam President” where the President chairs the meeting. “Chairperson” is an accepted title as well.
- i) **Division of Assembly** : (Refer “Incidental Motions”) This is a motion raised by a member who may call for the “Division of the House” when the result of a voice vote is in doubt. The Chairman then states “A division has been called for and can ask all those in favour to rise. And then, after asking them to be seated .. All those who oppose may rise. Same with “abstentions’ and then conclude by announcing the vote
- j) **Germane** : “Germane” means relevant / connected. For instance, it will be appropriate to say - The amendment must be “germane” to the main motion.
- k) **“Grant the Floor”**: The Chairman grants the floor. In other words, he recognizes a particular member to “address or speak”. It is the right of the Chairman to “grant the floor”. It is also his right to decide, who shall be granted the floor, when more members raise hands. The Chairman “grants the floor” and the member “obtains the floor”.
- l) **Minutes** : Minutes are always “confirmed”. This is the more appropriate term to “approved”. Confirmation of minutes is to make the minutes, as recorded and circulated, binding on all.

Confirmation of minutes is an item on the Agenda of a subsequent meeting, under which the minutes as circulated or read out, pertaining to the previous meeting, gives rise to members to make corrections, if any. Once they are “confirmed”, with or without corrections, they serve as an authentic reference to the decisions taken in the past. The corrections, if any to the previous meeting minutes, must also be recorded in the subsequent meeting minutes, before stating that the “Minutes are confirmed”. The motion to confirm the minutes is proposed and seconded by members, who were present in the meeting in question (The meeting, for which the minutes are being confirmed)

- m) **Motion** : “Motion” is a proposal or a statement that demands attention of the Chairman or the members of the assembly, by a participating member. A “Main Motion” or a “Principal Motion” introduces new business before the assembly. It can be a proposal to put up a program or project for consideration by the house.
- n) **“Move a Motion”** : This is the right way to propose a motion. “*I Move that xxx*” is normally accepted.
- o) **“Obtain the Floor”** : This implies that a member has sought an opportunity to speak in a meeting. When the Chairman has recognized a member seeking such an opportunity, it is termed that the member has “obtained the floor”. No member can directly get up and speak. He must raise his hand or draw the attention of the Chairman to get recognized. A general rule, of course, with exceptions based on the nature of the motion proposed, is that only one person can obtain the floor, at a time.
- p) **Property of the House**: A motion, after it is duly proposed and seconded, has to be restated by the Chairman and put up for consideration of the house for purposes of discussions. This motion then becomes the “property of the house”. Any withdrawal of a motion by the proposer, after it has become the property of the house, must have the consent of the house. Merely because the proposer has withdrawn the motion after certain discussions held, will not affect the withdrawal of the motion unless such withdrawal is approved by the majority members in the assembly.

- q) **“Ruling”**: The Chairman announces the result of the majority opinion on a proposal / motion presented before the house / assembly. This is termed as the “ruling by the Chairman”. A motion gets concluded upon, after its discussion and voting, and the Chairman declares that the motion is “carried” or “adopted” or “lost” or any other form based on the decision taken. The ruling of the Chairman is binding on all concerned. To “call to order” or “To Adjourn” is also a ruling by the Chairman. Ruling is to stop further discussions or debate on the matter, which was pending at the time of giving the “ruling”.
- r) **Ultra-Vires** : It means “Out of the purview / against the prescribed”. When the proposal is beyond the purview of the constitution or against what is already prescribed, it may be said: The motion is ultra-vires the constitution
- s) **Voting ~ Invalid Votes**: The validity of the vote must always be determined before the election committee takes up the counting of the votes to establish the result. It is not desirable to invalidate votes after the counting of votes commences or concludes. For instance, where there are 400 votes polled, the election committee must determine the validity of the votes and the invalid votes must be set aside before segregating the votes polled by the respective candidates. In this case the invalid votes decided upon by the committee are 9. The result then gets established as 196 Vs 195. At this stage, it is incorrect for the committee to review the validity of these 391 votes counted.
- t) **Vote of Thanks is “proposed”**: Chairman must be very clear in stating that the “vote of thanks” will be “proposed” by the member. To state that the “Vote of Thanks” will be delivered or given is not appropriate language.
- u) **Waiver of the Constitution**: This is an act by the General Body, which is based on the “majority” prescribed in respective constitutions, where application of the constitution is waived. For instance, where a constitution mandates a notice period of 21 days to convene a general body, and the notice for the meeting is sent only 19 days prior, this meeting is considered valid when the waiver is adopted by the house. Experience shows that in constitutions where “waiver” clause exists, required “quorum” is higher and the majority to adopt waiver is also higher. In some cases, majority is not based on members present, but on members of the association.

The Conduct of a Meeting

A good meeting is a positive image to an organization. President and the Secretary can play an important role to ensure orderly, interesting and educative meetings.

Some rules governing a Meeting :

There are two types of General Body Meetings: A regular General Body Meeting and a Business Meeting. All meetings of the Board of Directors are "Business Meetings". All business meetings are normally governed by a notice period for circulating the notice and agenda.

Regular Meeting of the General Body : A "regular meeting" is held to invite speakers, organize a celebration (like an Installation Night or Charter Night or Awards Night), commemorate events (like Founders Day), Independence or Republic Day, Teachers Day, Doctors Day, Children's Day, Women's Day, United Nations Day, etc. Members are encouraged to invite guests.

Business Meeting of the General Body : A Business Meeting is held to transact business – to approve budget, to adopt accounts, to receive the reports of President/ Secretary or Board by the General Body or any business related to the functioning of the organization. In Business Meetings guests are not encouraged. There is an annual business meeting – "Annual General Meeting", which is held to transact business such as "Approval of Budget"; "Adoption of Accounts"; "Elections of Officers", etc. In addition there are business meetings, held once in every other quarter, to review the functioning of the organization. An EGM (Extra-ordinary General Body Meeting) can be held mid-term subject to the provisions of the constitution.

Good Standing / Active Members : Members are in Good Standing if they have paid the annual fee and are entitled to vote at Business Meetings. Those not in "Good Standing" can attend the meetings *but cannot vote*.

Constitution / Bye-Laws of an organization : International Organizations prescribe a standard constitution (bye-laws) for all Local Units (Clubs). The local unit can have their own Bye-Laws subject to the "standard Bye-laws" to prevent conflicts. Where there is a conflict between the local constitution and a higher protocol organization or International Constitution, the latter prevails.

Chairmanship of Business Meetings : The President is generally the Chairman of the Business Meetings. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Presidents, in their order, shall serve as Chairman. If none present, the members present can elect one of the members as the Chairman.

Meeting Agenda : The normal practice for Business Meetings is based on the following Agenda. Agenda is the “order of the meeting”.

- a) **Call to Order :** *The Chairman loudly announces “I call this meeting to order” – strikes the Gavel.*
- b) **Establishment of Quorum :** Chairman announces the establishment of Quorum
- c) **Prayer / Flag Invocation / Invocation / Creed :** This is “rendered” or “invoked”.
- d) **Adoption of Agenda :** *Any circulated Agenda of a Business meeting is a proposed Agenda. This item on Agenda makes the proposed Agenda binding on members. It offers opportunities to members to suggest modifications, subject to the approval of the house.*
- e) **Opening Remarks by the Chairman:** *Chairman has this unique privilege of addressing the house. He/She must use it well to improving the speaking skill.*
- f) **“Confirmation” of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting :** *(Business Meeting). All decisions taken and recorded in the minutes are pre-circulated/read out and confirmed in the next meeting. “Confirmation” certifies the minutes recorded as “true and accurate” version of the decisions taken in the previous meeting. “Confirmed” minutes are binding on the members. Where members successfully propose corrections prior to their confirmation, such corrections are recorded in the minutes of the current meeting under “Confirmation of Minutes”. The minutes will read – The minutes of the meeting held on xx were confirmed with the following corrections that were approved by the house.*
- g) **Greetings :** *To recognize and greet members / guests.*
- h) **Report of the Secretary**
- i) **Adoption of Budget / Adoption of Accounts / Elections (if any)/ Declaration of Results**
- j) **Any other Matter**
- k) **Vote of Thanks**
- l) **Adjournment**

Duties / Responsibilities of a Chairman

- To ensure that the notice of the meeting, along with the Agenda detailing the business to be transacted, is circulated as required by the Bye-Laws of the Association. Though, it may be the responsibility of the Secretary or some other designated officer to send the notice of the meeting, it continues to be the responsibility of the Chairman to ensure that the same is consistent with the established procedures.
- To assign responsibilities to members of the assembly to perform designated tasks that are required to accomplish the success of a meeting.
- To be punctual – well mannered – and ensure that the meeting is conducted in the most appropriate way by taking care of all established customs, precedents, and expectations.
- To highlight the purpose of the meeting and to ensure that the members of the assembly are fully aware of the same.
- To be knowledgeable on the Constitution & Bye Laws, Parliamentary Procedures, and on the subjects that will be deliberated at the meeting. It is always advisable that the Chairman carries with him a copy of the Constitution, Robert's Rules of Order and other required documents that may be often referred to.
- To help members with presentation of motions – guide them to follow parliamentary procedures – reword their motions, where required and ensure that members get opportunity to be heard.
- To work closely with the other officers of the association in teaming up for the meeting; to have the records well maintained, and ensure that the records are available, when demanded.
- As a Chairman, one must be willing to accept shortcomings, rather than defending lapses. Most chairmen, become unpopular, because of the manner in which they react to adverse situations. It is the duty of every Chairman to fulfill the reasonable expectations of members in the assembly and ensure adherence of established traditions.

The Parliamentary Powers of a Chairman

The Chairman presiding over an Assembly/Meeting is empowered with certain powers that are unique to the Chairman. These powers go with the "authority" of Chairmanship. Not only the Chairman, but the members of the assembly must be aware of these powers.

- To call the meeting/assembly to order.
- To adjourn the meeting. Adjournment takes place under various situations.

When the business of the assembly/meeting is transacted or has been concluded upon.

When a motion to adjourn is moved by a member and such motion gets carried, the chairman adjourns the assembly/meeting by ruling that the meeting is adjourned.

When, as guided by the bye-laws or the constitution, the "Quorum" does not get established. Normally, the meeting is first called to order, and thereafter, the item of the Agenda is "Establishment of Quorum". At this point of time, if it is confirmed that the requisite quorum does not exist, the Chairman adjourns the meeting.

When deliberations go out of control seriously. This is a unique power of the Chairman to close the meeting due to major disorder in the house. However, this power of the Chairman must be used very judiciously since it can lead to several consequences.

- To decide who shall address the meeting / assembly. It is the right of the chairman to grant the floor to the speaker. The right to speak is the right of a member. But unless the member is granted the floor, or given an opportunity to do so by the Chairman, the member cannot forcibly take the floor and speak. It is the duty of the Chairman to encourage maximum participation and assign the responsibility to speak to as many members. Chairman must offer participation to those delegates who have not spoken or are less participative. It is well within the Chairman's power to avoid granting the floor to members who have already presented their point of view on a particular motion/subject/debate.

- To “restate” the motion / proposal, and make such proposal the “property of the house”. It is the duty of the Chairman to help rewording a motion in compliance with regular procedures.
- To call for a vote. When the Chairman is satisfied that adequate discussions / debate have taken place, he can call for a vote. The chairman is mandated to call for the vote due to the motion of “previous question” as well.
- To give ruling on a motion that is put to vote by announcing the decision of the majority vote. The Chairman shall also rule on a motion moved by a member, depending upon the type of the motion.
- To prevent irrelevant discussions and to refuse the usage of un-parliamentary or unacceptable language.
- To avoid “restating” a motion or refuse a motion to be tabled for discussions, when it is inconsistent with the constitution, byelaws, or established procedures. In other words, it is well within the powers of the Chairman to prevent a motion from being discussed or debated due to these reasons.
- To preserve order in the assembly. Chairman has the right to preserve order in the assembly. The Chairman can ask for a member to be kept out of the meeting, when such a member is destructive and demonstrates unruly behaviour.
- To vote as a primary member of the assembly. The Chairman, as a member of the assembly, also has the right to vote, though it is at his/her option. He/She may desire to abstain from voting, in order to reflect his/her neutrality. The Chairman has the power of a Casting Vote which he can exercise upon the result of a motion that results in a “tie”. Casting Vote does not extend to an “Election”. The Casting vote is also available when in the first instance the Chairman decided to abstain. However, the abstained vote cannot be brought back once the result of the election is ascertained.

The Rights of a Member of an Assembly

Every member of the Assembly has certain rights and privileges. A good Chairman is one who recognizes these rights and allows the member his/her privileges. It is equally essential that participants of an assembly must be aware of their rights and privileges.

- To be considered for Quorum.
- To obtain the floor - Members have a right to speak at an Assembly. For this purpose, they must get recognized by the Chairman, and thus obtain the floor to do so. The general rule is that only one person can obtain the floor, at a time.
- To debate or deliberate on proposals / debatable motions
- To vote, or to abstain from voting.
- To move (propose) and second motions, wherever required or desired.
- To object to the consideration of a motion.
- To Appeal against the ruling of the Chairman.
- To demand the general privileges those are offered to participating members of the assembly.
- To support and of course, demand through a motion, 'order' in the house.

“Chairperson” is a modified title for “Chairman”. It is perfectly correct to address a Lady presiding over a meeting or an assembly as “Madam Chairman”.

Parliamentary Procedures

Introduction

Parliamentary procedures are a set of established rules to help associations or organizations conduct orderly meetings. Meetings must facilitate fair participation by all its members and they must support the process of decision making in a democratic manner.

Parliamentary procedures have, over the years, proved most effective in successfully dealing with various situations that come up when members of an Assembly are aggressive with their debates and discussions in a meeting. These procedures not only guide the membership on the logical approach to decision making, but offer ample opportunities to participate effectively. Parliamentary Procedures can be put to use by any organization or even at the State Assembly or the National Parliament.

The most interesting aspect of meetings, especially the ones that are packed with deliberations, is the manner in which people rise to speak, to debate, to vote, to support or object, and conclude decisions. These can happen in a highly democratic manner, when guided well by the Chairman.

- Have you witnessed excellent Chairmanship of a meeting and were thrilled with its conduct? It could have been either at a large conference or a well debated meeting at Club Level or an assembly that has large number of members.
- Have you witnessed a group of members' debate or participate in a meeting and impressed by their ability to hold discussions – to resolve on various subjects or debate on some crucial matters??
- Are you a Leader and a good Chairman who can articulate well and effectively conduct a meeting / conference or an assembly? Are you that member who boasts of being the meeting specialist or a Chairman who can keep members in a well regulated and disciplined format?

Here's your opportunity. You are offered the privilege to emerge as a meeting specialist in parliamentary procedures. As an accomplished parliamentarian, you will be able to successfully debate or participate at any meeting of any size. You can thoroughly enjoy to chair the meeting as well. You will find these notes, extremely useful and

interesting. You are encouraged to apply these in all meetings to infuse “quality” and bring liveliness into a meeting.

A good leader must emerge as a great parliamentarian. Establish yourself as a successful Meeting Specialist! The knowledge you gain will be useful to you as a participant at a meeting or as a Chairman of a meeting. This knowledge can also help you in many more ways than to merely restrict your skill to a meeting.

Subject of Parliamentary Procedures is authored and compiled, using the vast experience that has been gained over the years, to offer members the advantage of being a specialist Chairman or a specialist speaker at a meeting. You will undoubtedly emerge as a distinguished leader, from whom people will look forward to receive advice from time to time. Why deprive yourself of this privilege?

The best part is when you specialize in these procedures, you get qualified to be an effective member of a State Assembly or the National Parliament – you never know! Not many leaders can boast of this skill. Please don't take a back seat.

The Four Basic Ground Rules of Parliamentary Procedures

- 1) Rule by Majority*
- 2) Protection of Minority*
- 3) Opportunity for all to be heard*
- 4) Orderly Meetings*

Roberts Rules of Order

Most associations, globally, have prescribed in their constitutions, that for all procedures, not fully detailed or covered in their respective constitutions, Roberts Rules of Order, newly revised, will apply.

Roberts Rules of Order, provide for well tested meeting procedures. They are rules to govern an assembly of persons. All meetings are controlled by the general will of its membership. These rules stipulate the various forms of expressions and prescribe the respective rights of the Chairman and members. They guide discussions to enable proper decision making. Most respectfully, they offer rights even to those who do not enjoy adequate majority in the assembly.

Robert's Rules provide for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation.

Roberts Rules are revised from time to time and they evolve based on new situations that keep coming up at meetings. Hence most organizations fall back on Roberts Rules of Order to ensure that they are updated on the procedures. The most recent is the 11th Edition, which replaces all previous editions as the parliamentary authority in organizations whose bylaws prescribe "Robert's Rules of Order".

General Roberts, a General and an Engineer in the US Army who had drafted these procedures to benefit organizations, said:

"If there were no rules or established customs to guide an assembly of persons, and if each could talk on any subject as long and as many times as he pleased, and if all could talk at the same time, it would be impossible in most cases to ascertain their deliberate judgment on any particular matter. Experience has shown the necessity for rules, for a presiding officer to enforce them and to preserve order, and for a recording secretary to keep a record of the business transacted by the assembly."

The key aspects of this statement that guides orderly meetings are:

- 1) That one person cannot talk as long as he/she pleases.
- 2) That all cannot talk at the same time.

The Four Basic Ground Rules of Parliamentary Procedures

The foundation of Parliamentary procedures rests on FOUR BASIC ground rules:

- 1) Rule by Majority
- 2) Protection of Minority
- 3) Opportunity for all to be heard
- 4) Orderly Meetings

These 4 rules are the hallmark of a democratic process. Unless a decision is backed by a basic majority, there cannot be its implementation or governance on all. It is important, in order to ensure fairness to all, that even those who may not enjoy the majority vote, continue to have some privileges and rights, and it is such protection of the minority that enables their continuance in the organization. A participating member, as far as possible, must be heard. Voting, to an extent, fulfils this requirement, since the member is given the right to offer his/her opinion as well. Of course, the very purpose of any procedure is to ensure orderliness in the assembly. One cannot disrespect the fact, that the foundation for any successful organization is successful meetings. It is important that these meetings that are convened to decide, are held in an orderly manner.

Quorum / Majority Rule

Quorum confirms the presence of required minimum number of members to have business transacted at a business meeting. Any Assembly, which transacts business (Board Meeting, General Body Meeting, Cabinet Meeting, or any other official meeting, where the purpose is to decide and mandate decisions on others), must have the requisite Quorum to accomplish its purposes. Requisite Quorum present confirms the meeting's legality and empowers the assembly with authority.

Associations, Clubs, or groups of persons governed by any constitution, bye-laws, agreement or memorandum, are directed by the stipulation of "minimum members required to be present" to form the Quorum. Quorum is prescribed either as a percentage of members or a minimum number of members present.

Webster's dictionary defines Quorum as the number of officers or members of a body that when duly assembled is legally competent to transact business

According to Robert's Rules of Order, the "requirement for a quorum is protection against totally unrepresentative action in the name of the body by an unduly small number of persons"

In certain associations, the requirement of Quorum can change, based on what is stipulated. For instance, the quorum required to convene or to conduct a meeting may be different from the Quorum required to adopt a waiver of the constitution.

When there is no presence of Quorum, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution, Roberts Rules of Order shall prevail. However, the association has a few options. The meeting is adjourned for half an hour, and then reconvened; or the meeting is held at the same place and same time, one week later for which no such notice is required. Some constitutions provide for this procedure.

In case where the meeting is reconvened on the same day after some time and quorum continues to be deficient, it is desirable that at such meetings, the decisions taken are of an administrative or functional nature and no policy changes or policy decisions can be taken which become binding on all members.

Quorum's continued presence: It is not correct that once a quorum is established, it continues to exist no matter how many members leave the meeting in progress. It is important that the Chairman or some other member must have noticed that a quorum is no longer present. A member can propose a motion to "establish quorum" (not interrupting the speaker) and the Chairman is compelled to check the quorum. Should the required number of members be not present; the Chairman must declare the meeting adjourned. (Motion to establish the quorum is a "point of order" and hence does not require a seconder" and requires the Chairman to dispose of the motion"). The absence of quorum generally does not affect prior action.

Voting at Meetings – The Majority Rule

The Majority Rule, signifies that decisions are taken rightfully and by more than half of the members present. A simple majority is defined as 50% + 1 member. The Majority is not 51% but is 50%+1. In a large sized audience, there is a substantial difference between these two. In case of 1000 people in the audience the majority is 501 which is 50%+1 and not 51% which is 510.)

However, in some decisions of the Assembly, majority required may be greater than 50% + 1, depending on the nature of business being

transacted or the decision being taken. The respective constitutions of organizations / associations may stipulate percentage of majority that is required to take certain decisions (for instance – suspension or expulsion or amendment).

When the constitutions / bye-laws of an Association do not prescribe any specific majority for taking certain decisions, and where such association refers to Roberts Rules of Order, in such situations, the majority prescribed by Roberts Rules of Order will apply. Roberts Rules of Order prescribes a higher percentage, in disposing of certain motions.

A motion to suspend / expel a member or a motion to object to the consideration of a principal/main motion, or a motion to prevent discussions on a main motion, requires 2/3rds majority.

Computing the result of a vote by rounding off to the nearest number is not the way to go about determining the majority. For instance if 2/3rd vote of 50 members is 33.33, it is not correct to state that 33 members is adequate. The principal of majority is based on “at least” – and hence you require 34 votes to conform to 2/3rd majority.

The beauty of Parliamentary Procedures lies in ensuring privileges to the members of the assembly. It may be recalled that a basic ground rule of Parliamentary Procedures is “Opportunity for all to be heard”. If any motion is aimed to deprive a member of his/her privilege (a motion proposed and seconded, which must be debated is being objected from consideration or is prevented from being debated before it is put to vote (previous question)) – such motions need more than a simple majority to be adopted.

Abstention vs. Majority Vote: “Abstention Vote” is a decision “not to vote” or a refusal to vote. In a situation where a majority vote or two-third's vote is required of “members present and voting” an abstention has no effect on the result of vote, since what is required is a majority (simple or two-thirds) of the votes “cast” (Out of 50 members, when 5 abstain and 24 vote in favour vs. 21 against, the majority of votes “cast” is considered achieved). But if the vote required is a majority two-thirds of the “member's present” or “entire membership”, an abstention vote will have the same effect as a “no” vote. To genuinely refrain from voting must be read with the “required percentage of vote”. The above example will have to be read as 26 “No Votes” and 24 “Yes Votes”.

The “formal” process of Parliamentary procedures at a Meeting

You cannot speak, unless you are recognized

It must be recalled that one of the most important purposes of Parliamentary Procedures is to ensure “orderly meetings”. All deliberations must be disciplined.

For a member to speak at the Meeting, the first requisite is to seek permission from the Chairman to speak. This is done by “Obtaining the Floor” – where the member is recognized by the Chairman to speak at the meeting. Chairman “Grants” the Floor.

Once the “Floor is granted to a particular member”, such member alone has the right to speak. At no point of time, can there be two speakers at the same time.

The appropriate way to “Obtain the Floor” is to raise your hand or to rise to get recognized by the Chairman.

It is the Chairman's prerogative to decide who shall address the Assembly. It is the power of the Chairman to decide who shall speak, especially in situations where more members want to speak. The Chairman shall however, time / situation permitting, allow as many desirous members to speak. The Chairman's duty is to offer the right to speak to those members who have not spoken before, or have had a limited participation in the meeting.

*The Right usage of “Term”
“I move a Motion” . . . is the
correct way to propose a subject or a
motion before the house.*

*Point of Privilege
is to be used for drawing attention
when prime privileges are infringed
or overstepped. Do not use it for
miscellaneous privileges.*

Process of Deliberations in the Assembly

Speaker getting Recognized to Decision Making by the Assembly

- Proposing Motions

The most appropriate manner to guide the deliberations at an Assembly is to ensure that motions are proposed and seconded (where they must be seconded) before they can be taken up for discussion or decision making.

The proposer must first “Obtain the Floor” – get recognized by the Chairman, and then state the motion / proposal. The appropriate language is ..“ I move that”. The member rising to state the motion must be affirmative in his motion. In other words, a motion must be positively worded.

Most motions require seconder. Once seconded, the motion is put up for discussion before the Assembly by the Chairman. (Exception: There are certain motions that do not require to be seconded.)

The Chairman has a right to refuse a badly worded motion.

- Property of the House (Motion / Proposal restated by the Chairman)

Once the motion is proposed and seconded, such a motion, prior to it being deliberated, has to be restated by the Chairman. In other words, the Chairman gives the motion, a legal status, by restating the motion as proposed and seconded, and invites the house to commence deliberations. Once restated by the Chairman, the motion is the “Property of the House”.

Property of the House - is a status granted to a motion, to suggest that the motion is no more the property of the proposer or seconder, but the property of the Assembly. It is only at the discretion of the house, that this restated motion / proposal is deliberated, decided or withdrawn. Once the discussions commence the proposer cannot withdraw the motion, unless such withdrawal is with the concurrence of the Assembly.

- **Withdrawal of Motion**

It is observed, that in the middle of a debate, the “Proposer” and/or Secunder desires to withdraw the motion. Can the Chairman accept the withdrawal offer and have the motion withdrawn from the house? The answer is – NO. The debate has already commenced. The motion is the “Property of the House”. It is only for the House to allow the “withdrawal” and not the Chairman's right. The withdrawal is in order, when the Chairman seeks the consent from the house – where majority of the members in the house support the “withdrawal” by the proposer.

Where the motion is proposed, seconded and the withdrawal comes up before the Chairman has restated the motion or allowed the Assembly to commence discussions, the Chairman need not take the consent of the house. The Chairman can rule the motion as withdrawn.

- **Process of Debate leading to Decision Making**

The Chairman must follow certain procedures to ensure effective deliberation at the meeting.

The proposer, in case of all debatable motions, is given the first right to address the Assembly, so that members of the Assembly get an insight into why a particular motion is proposed before the House. A seconder can supplement.

After the opening address by the proposer / seconder is heard, it is the duty of the Chairman to identify those who may have a different view or who want to object to the motion. The process of debate rotates between those who speak in favour and those who speak against. The cycle continues till a decision is taken.

The Chairman, on being satisfied, that adequate discussion is held, may state “We had enough discussion on the motion. It is time to arrive at a decision. All those in favour of the motion, as proposed by Mr XX and seconded by Ms XX OR as amended, may raise their hands to signify their support to the motion. He will continue to state “All those against – same sign” . . . In case of abstentions he/she will seek the count of those who have abstained from voting, and based on the response by the house, will give his/her ruling on the result of the motion.

When a motion gets the required support, the Chairman's ruling is "The motion is carried", signifying that the motion has received the required majority. Where the motion lacks the required majority, the Chairman's ruling is "The motion is lost".

- Resolution:

Once the motion is adopted / carried by the Assembly, it is a "resolution".

In the minutes, the decision is recorded as "Be it hereby resolved that . . .".

Proposed by XX; Seconded by XX. Unanimously adopted or carried or Adopted by Majority (as the case may be)

Guidelines : Raise your hand, or rise to get recognized to say . . . Mr Chairman or Madam Chairman. Wait to get recognized. Once you are granted the floor, you may say "Mr Chairman, I move that we must increase the Membership Subscription by 20 percent to cover the increased costs".

The Chairman awaits the Secunder. This is a principal motion that requires to be seconded. Once the motion is seconded, the chairman restates the motion .. "Members of the House, there is a motion, proposed by XX and seconded by XX, to increase the membership subscription by 20 percent. I invite discussions. I shall give the first opportunity to Mr XX to explain his view point to the house" (The moment the Chairman has restated this motion, it becomes the property of the house. The proposer cannot withdraw this motion without the consent of the majority)

After sufficient discussions, the Chairman may say, "We had enough debate on this subject and it is time to decide on the motion. I call for the voting and ask all those in favour of the motion to increase the membership subscription by 20 percent, to raise their hands, to signify their support". On determining the number of votes, the Chairman says "All those against the motion may now raise their hands to oppose the motion". The Chairman may also ask "Any abstentions, you may raise your hand now"... Once the Chairman determines the vote, and where required majority is established, the Chairman declares "The motion proposed by XX and seconded by xx, to increase the membership subscription by 20 percent is carried"

Voting Procedure

The Chairman may opt for different approaches to voting. Various types of voting that the Chairman may choose from are:

- i. Voice Vote : Those in favour may say “Aye” and those against “No”
- ii. Show of Hands : Those in favour may raise their hands and those against – same sign
- iii. Vote by Roll Call: In small groups this is possible. Sometimes, it becomes important to record the voter's opinion. Each member is asked to say “Yes” or “No” as they are invited to vote by roll call. These votes are recorded.
- iv. General Vote : When the subject is of a routine nature or not as important, and depending on the mood of the house, the Chairman may ask for a general consent of the house, to confirm their agreement in favour.
- v. Secret Ballot : If there is a request for a Secret Ballot by a substantial number of members in the Assembly, either by a motion or through a request, the Chairman may rule in favour of a Secret Ballot Vote, especially on an aspect where maintenance of confidentiality is to keep good health of the Assembly and its members.
- vi. Division of Assembly : Voting is done based on an incidental motion to suggest that there is be no ambiguity in counting. Members are asked to take different sides, by physically moving to the right or left of the house. Division of Assembly can also come up to recount a closely contested vote.

*The Right usage of “Term”
The most appropriate manner to
declare a Motion as passed or
adopted is to declare it as
“The Motion is Carried”*

Motions

Main or Principal Motion and its effect

What is a Motion? It is a proposal made before the Assembly to transact business. It can be “To Approve a Project” or “To Adopt a Report” or any other similar business. This is the Main Motion. A Motion is also a proposal to regulate / amend / suspend discussion or decision on the Main Motion or even a proposal to demand order in the house. Such Motions fall under the category of Privileged or Subsidiary or Incidental or Miscellaneous / Unclassified Motions. Some effects of a Motion can be:

- To Adopt the Agenda
- To Confirm the Minutes
- To Amend the Constitution
- To Amend a Main Motion
- To Receive a Report
- To Adopt the Plan of Action
- To Approve the Accounts
- To Declare officers elected
- To Recognize / Appreciate / Place on record an outstanding effort
- To Finalize a Program or a Project
- To Demand “orderliness” in the house (Point of Order)
- To Demand “Privilege” of a Member (Point of Privilege)
- Etc

To propose a motion, the method is “I move that” (followed by the proposal). In most cases, all motions need a seconder, with exceptions.

Most motions are decided upon by the assembly and some are disposed of by the Chairman. When a motion is put up for “Adopting a Report”, and duly seconded, followed by sufficient discussions, the Chairman calls for a vote to determine the “majority support”.

There are motions that are disposed of by the Chairman. These motions are those that do not require to be seconded, and primarily relate to matters that support member privileges or insist on order in the Assembly. (Some situations : When a member feels that he/she is not being considered for any debate or participation in the assembly or when a member desires to avoid any deviation in the debate from the subject being discussed / assigned in the Agenda, or when a member needs certain information from the records or has a parliamentary inquiry).

Motions and their “Order of Precedence”

There are various categories of Motions. A good Chairman is focused on these types and is aware of the roles these Motions play. Every category is created with a specific purpose. Motions are of various kinds – that require a Proposer and a Secunder, or those that do not require a seconder. Motions can be either debatable or Non-Debatable, or can be amended or cannot be amended.

The general rule is that there is a Main / Principal Motion / Proposal, before the Assembly for the adoption of the Assembly. However, as the debate to consider it progresses in the Assembly, the main motion is always subject to several other motions that are either subsidiary to the main motion or incidental to the main motion.

Categories of Motions in Parliamentary Procedures:

- Main or Principal Motion
- Privileged Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Incidental Motions
- Miscellaneous or Unclassified Motions or restorative motions

Main or Principal Motion: The purpose of a Main or Principal Motion is to place proposals before the house or to introduce business. These proposals can be to approve a project or a report. However, an important aspect is that there is normally only one Main Motion before the Assembly, at one time. Main Motions yield to other category of motions - Privileged, Subsidiary, Incidental or Miscellaneous.

Privileged Motions: These are very powerful motions, hence called “Privileged”. These motions bring up matters that are urgent in nature and that must be disposed of immediately. Privileged Motions need not relate to the Pending Business, but may be of importance since they impact on rights of members or may insist on closing a meeting that continues beyond the reasonable hour. Privileged Motions rank high among all other type of motions. They have an “Order of Precedence” within themselves. An order of precedence denotes that when two motions of privileged category come up before the house, the Chairman has to take up the one higher in the order of precedence.

Subsidiary Motions: As the word “subsidiary” suggests, these motions are ancillary in nature to the Main motion. Their purpose is to facilitate the deliberation on the Main Motion and can change the impact of the main motion. Normally, subsidiary motions are voted before the Main motion is finally put up before the house, for its adoption.

Subsidiary motions have a rank lower to the Privilege Motions.

Incidental Motions: The title “Incidental” suggests that these motions are incidental to the Main motion. These are motions that deal with questions of procedure and arise from pending business. Their purpose is to help in seeking information, or even to ensure order. They must be considered before the action is taken on the question from which they arise.

Incidental Motions have no rank within them and are taken up immediately upon being stated, but however yield to the higher-ranked Privileged motions.

Miscellaneous or Unclassified or Restorative Motions: These are few motions that lie at the bottom of the Chart. They are used for the specific purposes like “bringing back a subject for discussion, when earlier tabled” or “reconsidering what has already been considered before” or “Rescinding the decision on a previous motion”.

The Right usage of “Term”

Minutes are always “Confirmed”.

“Confirmation of Minutes” is more appropriate language than “approval of minutes”.

Privileged Motions

(Motions in order of precedence with all other motions yielding to them)

- **Fix the Time to which to adjourn**
- **Adjourn**
- **Recess**
- **Point of Privilege**
- **Orders of the Day**

Fix the Time to which to Adjourn: The purpose of this motion is to fix a time for the next meeting, in case such a schedule has not been pre-decided. This motion's effect is better known and appreciated when there is a "motion to adjourn the current meeting" where important business is unfinished.

The adjournment of the meeting may be called for, by a member, through a "Motion to Adjourn". In such a situation, to enable accomplishment of unfinished business, it may be important for the Assembly to "fix the time to which to adjourn" – meaning to decide the time and place of the next meeting.

Privileged Motions have an "order of precedence" and "Fix the Time to which to adjourn" ranks higher on the list of motions in comparison to "To Adjourn". A timely response or a counter by a member of the Assembly, to a "motion to adjourn" by proposing this motion, can save the meeting from an unknown next. The moment a member has moved a motion "to adjourn" which is seconded and before the same is put up to the house for consideration, it is quality participation by a member to propose a motion "to fix the time to which to adjourn".

This motion requires to be seconded. It is not debatable and is amendable (the place and time for the adjourned meeting to be reconvened can be amended). The vote required is a simple majority.

However, if this motion is brought up before an Assembly that has already scheduled for a continuing meeting on the same or subsequent day, then this becomes a "Main Motion" and thus can be debated and amended. When the Assembly meets at a time for which the meeting was adjourned to, the meeting is considered as a continuation of the meeting that was adjourned.

Guideline for a member to state this motion : "Mr. Chairman, I move that the Assembly fix the time as xxx to which we must adjourn this meeting"

Adjourn: The purpose of this motion is “to adjourn the meeting, immediately”. The effect of this motion, when adopted, directs the Chairman to adjourn the assembly. The unfinished business is kept pending till the next meeting. No further debate or discussions are in order. It can actually mean that the meeting is concluded abruptly.

Normally, this motion is proposed when it is felt by a member of the Assembly that the meeting is getting delayed or when the situation, in his/her opinion, is going out of control (For this purpose, the motion to recess is more suggestive). A member may propose this motion to have the meeting concluded immediately, upon it being voted by the house. Once the motion is proposed, seconded and restated by the Chairman, the house has no option but to vote on the motion. The members must remember that the “Motion to Fix the Time for which to adjourn” can be moved prior to the consideration of the “motion to adjourn”, especially when the time for the next meeting is not fixed or the member desires that the next meeting must be held earlier.

This motion cannot interrupt the speaker. It requires a Secunder and cannot be debated and amended. The vote required is a Majority vote. The Chairman rules.. “The Meeting stands adjourned”

Guideline for a member to state this motion : “Mr Chairman, I move to Adjourn the Assembly / Meeting”

Recess : This motion is very similar to the motion to Adjourn, except that in this motion, it is not the closure of the meeting, but it is only a “time break” that is being asked for. The motion “To Recess” is very useful, at times when the Assembly is very noisy, or when the situation demands that there must be a recess to restore normalcy. This motion is also called for, to give a break or time out to members.

The effect of this motion, when adopted, directs the Chairman to Recess the assembly. The unfinished business can always be taken up, when the meeting gets reconvened. The Chairman, in this case, rules “The meeting is recessed till XXXX”

This motion cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder. It is not debatable and is amendable only to the extent of the time of recess. The vote required is a Majority vote.

Guideline for a member to state this motion : “Mr Chairman, I move to Recess the Meeting for XXX (Duration)”

Point of Privilege : The purpose of this motion is to raise a “Question of Privilege”. This is done when a member of the Assembly is deprived of any of his “Privileges”, which include his personal comforts, need for any assistance, to be excused due to ill health, right to speak or respond to an allegation or charge of misconduct by another member or any such situation where the privilege of the member is to be safeguarded.

The effect of this motion, when moved by the member, draws the immediate attention of the Chairman, who responds by asking “What is your Privilege?”. If the point or question of privilege raised is genuine, the Chairman responds by saying “Your privilege is granted”. Otherwise, the Chairman may refuse by saying that it is not a “Point of Privilege”

This motion can interrupt the speaker, does not require a Seconder. It is not debatable and is not amendable. There is no vote required to decide on this motion. It is the Chairman who has to dispose of this motion by granting the privilege or refusing the same since it is not a “Privilege”.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, Point of Privilege, or, I rise to a question of Privilege”

Orders of the Day: It is a good procedure to have the Agenda adopted, once the meeting is convened. The item “Adoption of Agenda” in the “Agenda” signifies the order in which business must be transacted and confirms the various subjects to be dealt with. Once the agenda gets adopted by the house, the Assembly must conform to the order of business and it is the duty of the Chairman to ensure the same.

There are two kinds of “Orders of the Day” - “General Order of the Day” and “Special Order of the Day”. The “General Orders” are given to certain businesses listed in the Agenda that must come up before the Assembly at an appointed time. They are, for instance, a speaker addressing the house or similar agenda items. The “Special Order” is a status given to certain items of the agenda, where these businesses must be only transacted at an appointed time – for instance, “Elections” or “Candidate's speeches” or a very important “external Dignitary” is addressing the assembly and whose address cannot be delayed. These subjects are known as “Time Certain” items.

“Orders of the Day” are motions that can be moved by a member to give this special status to certain business items in the Agenda. In the Agenda that is circulated, the Chairman can list some items as “Time Certain” items or “Special Order of the Day” and upon the “Adoption of the Agenda” by the Assembly, such “Orders of the Day” are deemed approved by the house.

However, at the appointed time of such item in the Agenda, when the Chairman fails to take note of an “Order of the Day”, this gives the rise for a member to draw the attention of the Chairman and demand specific adherence.

The “Time of Election” is a time certain item, since the voting member may decide to be present only for the election and planned his/her schedule accordingly. Likewise, it may not be considered appropriate for the Assembly to discuss their business matters when at the appointed time the “Guest Speaker” has turned up.

Rules insist that “time certain items” cannot be held at any other time, other than the appointed time. The Chairman has no right, by himself, to change the time. However, for compelling reasons, the “Orders of the Day” can be postponed by the consent of the house and the motion to propose such change requires to be seconded, must justify the reasons for postponing the appointed item on the agenda. This is debatable and can be amended as well. Since any change may deprive the privilege of a few or many members to have certain items taken up at the appointed time, a 2/3rd majority is required to postpone the “Orders of the Day”

At the appointed time, a motion demanding the “Orders of the Day” takes precedence over everything else, except the other privileged motions, viz – Fix Time, Adjourn, Recess, Point of Privilege.

This motion can interrupt the speaker, does not require a Seconder. It cannot be debated upon and cannot be amended. There is no vote required to decide on this motion and it is the Chairman who has to dispose of this motion by taking up the orders of the day.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, I call for the Order(s) of the Day, or I call for the “Special order of the day”.

*The Right usage of “Term”
Always remember - Vote of Thanks is
“Proposed”. To state that the
“Vote of Thanks” will be delivered or
given is not the most appropriate
language.*

Subsidiary Motions

(Yield to Privileged Motions since they are ranked lower to them. The order given Below indicates that they are ranked highest to lowest in order of precedence)

- Lay on the Table
- Previous Question
- To Limit or Extend Limits of a Debate
- Postpone to a Certain Time
- Refer to a Committee
- Amendment
- Postpone Indefinitely

Lay on the Table : The purpose of this motion is to “table the main motion” from its consideration. In other words, it temporarily sets aside the motion from being deliberated or decided upon. Since the effect of this motion is to defer its consideration while not being withdrawn, it is titled as “Laid on the Table”.

Sometimes, it may be preferred, not to decide on a particular motion due to its sensitivity, or due to some related information not immediately available. It may be the design of some members in the assembly to defer consideration of a particular motion and not to decide on it immediately.

When proposed, seconded and voted by the majority of members, the Chairman rules that the “Motion is laid on the Table” and directs that further deliberations on the motion / business cannot be held.

A motion to “Lay on the Table”, does not kill the motion, but is only setting aside a motion until such time, that it is taken up again. A motion that has been “Laid on the Table”, can always be taken up, after some other business has been transacted or in the next meeting, through another motion “To take back from the Table”.

No motion that has another motion adhering to it can be “Laid on the Table” by itself. In other words, where there is a motion to “amend a main motion”, the “motion to amend”, by itself, cannot be “Laid on the Table”. The general rule is that, when a motion gets tabled, it carries with it everything that adheres to it. The main motion, along with the Amendment motion both get tabled. Another example can be that if a main motion and its subsidiary motions amend and refer to a committee are pending, these go to the table with the main motion.

When a motion is tabled, no other motion on the same subject can be taken up that would anyway affect the motion that is tabled. It is necessary, first to take the motion from the table and move the new motion as a substitute one.

The motion lay on the table is recorded in the minutes, but it is not put on the agenda. A member must remember to make the motion take from the table. If a motion is laid on the table and is not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it dies. After it dies, a member has to present it as a new main motion. (Please refer motion "to Take back from the Table", to study the effect when motion is taken back from the table).

This motion cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder. It is not debatable and is not amendable. The required vote to adopt the motion "Lay on the Table" is a simple majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I move to "Lay the motion on the Table"

Previous Question : This is a unique motion in Parliamentary Procedures. It is also referred to as "Call the Question". The effect of this motion is to immediately "close debate" and "decide" immediately. It is hence also known as the "Motion that closes debate".

When business is introduced through a main motion, such business is normally debated. It is the Chairman's duty to encourage participation of the members. However, after the main motion is made the property of the house and is put up for consideration, the motion "Previous Question", when adopted, deprives the members from further debate. It does not allow any more discussions on the main motion.

Once "Previous Question" is proposed, seconded and supported by the members (2/3rd vote required), without allowing them to either debate or amend it, the Chairman has no option but to call for vote on the main motion. The Chairman states – "Previous Question is proposed and seconded and if adopted by 2/3rd majority, any further debate on the main motion will not be allowed, and the vote on the main motion will be taken up"

To illustrate – A main motion is proposed to increase "Membership Subscription" and it is made the property of the house. Members debate on "why the increase" or otherwise. At this time, the motion "Previous Question" is proposed and adopted, directs the Chairman to

immediately close the debate and call for “a vote on the main proposal of membership subscription”.

The motion “Previous Question” requires 2/3rd majority vote, since it deprives or curtails a member of his privilege to participate in a debate. However, the main motion continues to require the prescribed majority as defined in the bye-laws, which may be a simple majority.

The motion “Previous Question” cannot interrupt the speaker. It requires a Secunder. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. The required vote to close debate and put the main motion to vote (Previous Question) is 2/3rd majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, I call the Previous Question or “I call the Question”

To Limit or Extend Limits of a Debate : The motion “To Limit a Debate” is used to ensure timely disposal of the main motion. When the debate on any proposal before the assembly is expected to get lengthy or consume the limited time available, this motion is proposed to limit the time of the debate. It is also proposed to limit the time to be allowed for each speaker. This motion is proposed after the main motion is the property of the house. Since it curtails the general privilege of the member to debate more often or limits his participation, the vote required to adopt this motion is 2/3rd majority.

Due to exigencies, if the “time assigned to a Debate” is found not adequate, at the appointed time, the motion “Extend the Limits of a Debate”, when supported by a 2/3rd majority, extends the set Limits.

The motion “To Limit Debate” or “To Extend Limits of a Debate” cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder, and is not debatable. It is amendable, since the time being fixed may be amended. The required vote to Limit or Extend Limits of a debate is by a 2/3rd majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, I move “to Limit the Debate” or “I move to “Extend the Limits of the Debate”

Postpone to a Certain Time : The purpose of the motion is to postpone the consideration of the business, to a certain time, on the same day or to a different date. “Certain Time” denotes a “specifically appointed time” at which hour the business must be taken up for consideration.

Sometimes, due to the non availability of certain information, or due to any situation that comes up before an assembly, it may be felt that the consideration of the main motion be postponed to a “certain time”. Unlike the motion “To Lay on the Table”, this motion prescribes the time when the business has to be taken up.

The motion, when proposed and seconded; and the members are satisfied with the fixation of a “certain time”, the Chairman declares that the consideration of business is postponed to the “prescribed time”.

“To Postpone to a Certain Time” cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder. It can be debated and also amended. The required vote to “Postpone to a Certain time” is a simple majority. However, if the subject being postponed to make it a “Special Order of the Day” then it will require 2/3rd Majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, I move that the consideration of the Motion before the House be postponed to a XXX time”

Refer to a Committee: It's purpose is to refer the main motion to a committee. This could be for further study on the subject or to have a committee check the legality or how consistent the motion is with the established rules and procedures. It is referred to a committee to have them report back to the house on their findings.

It is observed that some members, in order to gain time or to prevent a motion from being considered, may refer the motion before a committee. Hence, it is important that when this motion is put to vote, a majority of the members in the Assembly must be in favour to refer the subject under consideration to a committee.

The motion, after its due proposal, and adoption by a majority vote to “Refer to a committee”, the Chairman rules - “the consideration of the motion is “Referred to a Committee”. It is in order for the house to specify as to when the Committee must report back or to direct the committee to report back before a specific time.

The motion “To Refer to a Committee” cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder. It is debatable and also amendable. The required vote is a simple majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr. Chairman, I move “To Refer to a Committee . . . to report back . . .”

Amendment : Amendment motion is meant to bring about a change in the Main Motion before the Assembly. Amendment is a modification made to the existing "Principal Motion". An amendment includes three features - to Add; or to Delete or to Substitute (To Delete and Add).

An Amendment must be relevant to the subject of the main motion. In other words it must be "germane" to the motion being amended. It cannot be unrelated to the Main or Principal Motion.

Amendment is an interesting aspect of arriving at the most desired situation when a debate is in process to consider a motion before the house. There are various stages through which the Amendment Motion goes through. These stages are better recognized as Amendment of the First Order and Amendment of the Second order. There can be no Amendment of the Third Order.

The first stage is a simple amendment to the main motion. To change the quantum of fee suggested; or to change the venue or date of the program; or to increase or decrease the number of officers in a board or committee; or to bring about any change in the application of the motion - This is known as Amendment of the First Order. A proposal, to amend the main motion, requires a seconder and must be supported by a majority vote. When the discussion on "amendment motion" commences, the consideration of the Main motion takes a back seat. Unless the motion to Amend is disposed of, the main motion cannot come up before the assembly.

After due debate, if any, the Amendment motion gets adopted, the Chairman declares "The motion before the house as Amended is". If the motion to Amend is not adopted by the house, the Chairman will state . . . The main motion as proposed is now put for consideration"

To illustrate: The main motion before the house, duly proposed is to increase the subscription to Rs 10,000 per member per year, from the existing Rs 8,000. A simple Amendment or an Amendment of the first order is to propose a motion that changes the suggested amount of Rs 10,000 to Rs 9,000 per year. After it is seconded and put up for consideration, should the house vote in favour of the decreased amount of Rs 9,000, the Chairman must state "the main motion before the house as amended is to increase the subscription from the existing Rs 8,000 to Rs 9,000 per year".

One important aspect of “Amendment of the First Order” is that there cannot be more than one “Amendment to a Principal Motion” on the floor. However, once the motion to amend the principal motion gets disposed of, another amendment to the main motion can be made. In other words, there can be any number of “Amendments of the first order” be placed before the house, before the consideration of the principal or main motion. The only requirement is they can come one after the other and not together.

Amendment of the Second Order is an interesting amendment and one must be careful to recognize its feature. Most often, this aspect is misunderstood by the members. The nature of this Amendment is to “Amend the Amendment”. The logic is clear. Whatever Amendment is on the floor, only such “proposed Amendment portion” can be further amended. An Amendment motion to reduce the subscription from proposed Rs 10,000 to Rs 9,000 can be further amended to change the Amendment proposal of Rs 9,000 to Rs 9,500. To propose the applicability of the first Amendment effective one year later, is not Amendment to Amendment. This aspect can come in as an Amendment to the main motion, once the motion that proposes to change Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000, along with its amendment motions is disposed of.

Amendment to Amendment motion, takes precedence over the motions to amend the main motion, while disposing of pending motions before the house. In other words, where there is a main motion before the assembly with a subsidiary “Amendment of the first order” motion, and an “Amendment of the second order” motion, the “Amendment of the second order” is first disposed of. Then the “Amendment of the first order motion” gets disposed of. And finally the main motion is then considered.

Points to note – A review on the effect of the Amendment Motion:

- *Principal Motion can get amended by either addition; deletion or substitution*
- *The motion to Amend can only be proposed when the main motion has become the property of the house, but before the main motion is disposed of or voted upon*
- *The motion to Amend must be related or relevant to the main motion. It must be germane to the main motion*

- *Once the motion to Amend is restated by the Chairman, the amendment to the main motion must first be considered. At this stage the consideration of the main motion takes a back seat.*
- *Once the Amendment Motion is disposed of, the main motion goes before the house as “as Amended”, in case the motion to Amend is adopted by the house*
- *There cannot be more than one “motion to Amend the main motion” (Amendment of the first order) before the house at the same time. However, once a motion to amend the main motion is disposed of, there can be another “Motion to amend the main motion as amended or otherwise placed before the house”.*
- *It is only after the motion to amend that is made the property of the house, can a motion to “Amend the Amendment” be proposed before the house*
- *The motion to “Amend the Amendment” must be relevant or connected to that portion which is before the house as “amendment to main motion”. It cannot be out of the scope of the Amendment motion.*
- *Once the motion to “Amend the Amendment” is the property of the house, the motion to Amend the main motion too, takes a back seat.*
- *The process is clear – there can be one main motion, one motion to Amend the main motion and one motion to Amend the Amendment, before the house simultaneously. The Chairman must first dispose of the Amendment to Amendment, then the motion to Amend the main motion and then the main motion.*

An Amendment to the Amendment to the Amendment, will mean an Amendment of the third order, and hence not allowed.

The key aspect of the Amendment Motion is that mere adoption of Amendment motion does not necessarily imply that the main motion is adopted. It is possible that some members are against the main motion. They support “Amendment motions” to provide for a lesser damage, just in case.

The motion to Amend or motion to Amend the Amendment, cannot interrupt the speaker. It needs a Secunder. It is debatable and also amendable. The required vote to amend the main motion or amend the amendment is a simple majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I move to amend the motion by . . ." (Deleting, Adding or Substituting)

Postpone Indefinitely: The purpose of this motion is clear - To kill the main motion from being considered. The effect of this motion, upon its adoption, postpones indefinitely the consideration of the main motion before the house.

Unlike the motion "Postpone to a certain time" where the consideration of a motion is postponed to a specifically appointed time, the motion to postpone indefinitely does not have any prescribed time by when the consideration of the main motion is taken up.

Though this motion deprives the right of a member to have the main motion considered by the house (deliberated and decided upon), yet the majority required to "postpone" is a simple majority. One may ask what can be the purpose of this motion – instead the same majority can defeat the main motion rather than postponing the decision indefinitely or killing the main motion. It is possible that in the opinion of the assembly, such a motion must exist on the floor of the house, but not considered and its very existence is adequate to enforce certain behavior / expectations from members.

The motion to Postpone Indefinitely cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder. It is debatable. It is not amendable since there is no scope for any amendment. The only aspect that could have been amended is the appointed time in the case of "postpone to a certain time". The required vote to postpone indefinitely is a simple majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely . . ."

*Demonstrate Respect to National Anthem / Flag
Salutation / Prayer*

*As this particular agenda item is
taken up, it is not enough if one rises.*

*It is preferred that all men must
button up their jackets. That is
respect.*

Incidental Motions

(There is no order of ranking between these motions)

- **Appeal**
- **Division of the Assembly**
- **Point of Order**
- **Point of Information**
- **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry**
- **Suspend Rules**
- **Object to Consideration**

Appeal : The purpose of this motion is to appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. When a member feels that the ruling of the Chairman is unjust or deprives him/her of his/her rightful stand, he/she can propose this motion of "Appeal". Once seconded, this motion is put to vote. Upon its disposal, it will determine whether the "Ruling of the Chairman" is the "Judgment of the Assembly"

The motion of "Appeal" is a disagreement by a member, with the decision/ruling of the Chairman.

When an "Appeal" is pending, a "Point of Order" can be raised. The Chairman decides on the "point of order", there being no appeal from this decision. However, the question as to the correctness of the ruling can be brought up at a later time, when no other business is pending before the house.

An Appeal is in order when another person has the floor. A response to "Point of Information" or "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry" is not a decision and hence the motion of "Appeal" cannot lie in such situations. The result of a vote by a Chairman is not the decision of the Chairman and therefore the motion of "Appeal" cannot be brought up. In such a situation, the motion "Division of the Assembly" is the solution.

A "Motion of Appeal" when adopted by the house, reverses the ruling of the Chairman.

The motion to Appeal, can interrupt the speaker, requires a Secunder. It can be debated in certain situations only. It cannot be debated when it relates to indecorum, or to transgression of the rules of speaking or if made during the Division of the Assembly or while the immediate pending question / motion is not debatable. It is not amendable since there is no scope for any amendment. The required vote to adopt the Appeal is simple majority.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr. Chairman, I Appeal on the ruling of the Chairman". It is a good way for the Chairman to express in response stating "Shall the ruling of the Chairman stand as the Judgment of the Assembly?"

Division of the Assembly : This is a motion proposed by a member to determine the correct result of voting. The action by the Chairman, in response to this motion, will prevent any ambiguity in the ruling of the Chairman on the correct assessment of the voting. This motion can be contrasted with the normal voice vote. A member can propose this motion by stating that he doubts the results of the vote. The Chairman, honouring the member proposing this motion, retakes the vote using the method of division, different from what was used previously (Voice vote)

A member who desires clarity on the count of votes can propose the motion "Division of the Assembly". This motion does not require any seconder. The Chairman is obliged to call for a physical division. The types of such division may be by asking people supporting, or opposing or abstaining to identify themselves by rising in turns, which enables the Chairman and the member to establish the result of vote. This is called the rising vote (stand up). This can also be done by asking members to go to different parts of the venue, literally dividing into groups to indicate their vote.

The motion "Division of the Assembly" cannot interrupt the speaker. There is no requirement for a Secunder. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. There is no voting since the motion is disposed of by the Chairman, by obliging the members move.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I call for a Division". This must be done when any motion is put to vote by the Chairman or immediately after the Chairman has announced the vote, and before any other main motion is taken up for consideration.

Point of Order : One important responsibility of Chairmanship is to enforce rules governing the assembly to ensure orderly meetings. There must not be any delay in such enforcement. A good Chairman keeps the house in control and in order.

It is the right of every member to demand order in the house. When a member notices a breach of rule, he/she has a right to insist the enforcement of "order". The member rises to say " Mr Chairman, I rise to a Point of Order". This motion moved by a member, is in order, when there is an abuse of the proceedings or when the deliberations by the members are disorderly.

The motion is powerful to the extent that it interrupts the speaker and demands immediate attention of the Chairman. The Chairman immediately allows the member to state the "Point of Order". No seconder is required. He may ask "What is your point of Order?"

On hearing the complaint, the Chairman decides on its validity. The appropriate positive response is "Your Point of Order is in Order" and the Chairman directs the enforcement of order or suitably guides the deliberations as per the established rules. Should the motion be wrongly used, the Chairman declares by stating "Your Point of Order is out of Order"

There are several situations that disturb proceedings. Most common ones are listed below which gives rise to a member to propose this motion.

- (i) A second person rises to speak when there is a speaker on the floor (unless it is a motion that can "interrupt the speaker" which is introduced by a second speaker)
- (ii) Subject under discussion has deviated into an unconnected area.
- (iii) Deviation from the main agenda and some other subject is deliberated upon.
- (iv) A few or more members disturb the proceedings by an internal discussion.
- (iv) Members commence debate on a motion that is proposed and seconded even before the Chairman restates the same or makes it the property of the house.
- (v) Activity which is inconsistent with the established procedures.

"Point of Order" must be raised when the breach occurs. One cannot come up with this motion, at a later stage to suggest that the house was not behaving in order when the main proposal was decided upon. However, where the main motion, put up for adoption, is in violation of laws or constitution or by-laws or standing rules or fundamental parliamentary principles, the motion despite it being voted, can have a "Point of Order" raised at a later stage.

The motion "Point of Order" can interrupt the speaker, if urgent in nature. There is no requirement for a Secunder. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. There is no voting since the motion is disposed of by the Chairman

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, Point of Order".

Point of Information : A member may seek information from the Chairman or through the Chairman from any member of the assembly, on a subject which is relevant to the motion before the house. Such information may help the assembly with facts that can influence their decision to either support or oppose a given motion, or otherwise.

Accordingly, a member rises to the motion “Point of Information” and asks for information. For instance, when a budget is proposed before the house for its adoption, it is an accepted norm for a member to be

informed as to what the particular expense amounted to, in the previous year. This can be ascertained by the member rising on “Point of Information” and stating “Mr Chairman, I would like to learn as to how much amount was spent on this expense during the previous year?”

The Chairman may respond by answering the question or may direct any other member in the house to give this information.

“Point of Information” is a motion to “seek” information and not to “give” information. It is often observed that members rise on this motion, and start giving information to the house. This is not acceptable.

The motion “Point of Information” can interrupt the speaker, if urgent in nature. There is no requirement for a Secunder. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. There is no voting since the motion is disposed of by the Chairman by either giving the required information or directing someone else to keep the member informed.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, Point of Information”.

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry : This motion is very similar to the motion “Point of Information”. However, in this case, the motion is called for by a member to seek clarification on a procedure or clarification on parliamentary matters / constitution, etc.

Members may not be sure as to what the laid down rules or policy states. They may not be aware of the “period of notice” or “percentage of voting required” or any other aspect that is related to rules and procedures. Hence the member rises to seek “information on parliamentary matters” by asking for “Point of Parliamentary Inquiry”.

The Chairman may respond by clarifying on the point raised or may ask another member to clarify.

The motion "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry" can interrupt the speaker, if urgent in nature. There is no requirement for a Seconder. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. There is no voting since the motion is disposed of by the Chairman by either giving the required information or directing someone else to answer the member.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, Point of Parliamentary Inquiry".

Suspend the Rules : The effect of this motion is to suspend the rules of the assembly to facilitate the uninterrupted completion of a particular business or a specific event within the official program of the assembly.

At several large assemblies or during conferences, "Suspension of the Rules of Procedures" is adopted for a temporary period, to support an un-interrupted conduct of a particular item on the agenda. A formal occasion like an Inaugural Function does not merit any deliberations or questions raised by members. A motion to "Suspend Rules" is adopted by the house. This empowers the Chairman to disallow any questions or participation by the members.

The motion requires to be seconded. The rules of the assembly cannot be suspended except for a definite purpose. The motion requires a two-thirds majority vote on this motion. "Suspension of Rules" withdraws the privileges of members (right to speak), hence the higher percentage of voting. No subsidiary motion can be applied to this motion.

The motion "Suspend the Rules" cannot interrupt the speaker. It requires a seconder. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. The motion requires 2/3rd majority votes to apply.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I move to Suspend the Rules . . .". It is also in place, for the Chairman, at the commencement of any meeting to advise the house on his desire to "Suspend the Rules" and have the same consented by the house, with the required majority.

Object to Consideration : The purpose of this motion is to object to the consideration of a motion proposed by a member. The Chairman is empowered, to refuse motions for their consideration when they are badly worded, or they are inconsistent with the rules / constitution of the association.

However, there can be motions that may not have been objected to by the Chairman, but in the opinion of the house, any discussions may cause damage or ill repute. Members are within their rights to propose the motion "Object to the Consideration" to prevent consideration of the main motion.

Some motions can be very sensitive and threaten to harm the reputation of a member. Irrespective of the outcome of voting, even discussion on the proposed motion can lead to ill-repute of a member. To avoid this, a member is encouraged to propose a motion "to Object to the Consideration" of the proposal/subject before the house. It is important to note that the motion to "Object to Consideration" must be proposed prior to the commencement of the debate. If the member is late in realizing that the subject must not be considered and desires to stop further discussion or action, there are other motions which he/she can always bring up.

Importantly, that motion applies when "a single member is of the opinion that the subject must not be considered". There is no requirement for a seconder.

This motion, on its adoption, deprives the members of their due right to participate or debate. Hence the required majority is 2/3rd.

The motion "Object to Consideration" can interrupt the speaker. No Secunder required. It cannot be debated and cannot be amended. The motion requires 2/3rd majority votes to apply.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I object to the consideration of the Question / Motion . . .".

The Right usage of "Term"

Any Amendment made to a motion on the floor of the house must be

Germane (relevant or connected) to the main motion

Miscellaneous , Unclassified or Restorative Motions *(There is no order of precedence)*

These are Motions that support the house to bring back a pending motion or an earlier considered motion before the Assembly, for re consideration. There is no order of precedence in these motions. These motions can only be introduced when no other business is pending. Some motions under this category are:

- **To Take from the Table**
- **Reconsider**
- **Rescind or Cancel or Change previous action**

To Take from the Table : The purpose of this motion is to bring up for consideration what was earlier tabled (suspended from consideration) by the house through a motion "Lay on the Table", either in the same meeting (after some other business has been considered) or in the next meeting after it was tabled.

The effect of this motion, when adopted by the house, is that the tabled motion is brought back for consideration before the house by the Chairman. The motion to "Take from the Table" yields to privileged and incidental motions but not to subsidiary motions. It cannot be debated.

"To take back from the table" can only be proposed in the same meeting, after some business is transacted since it was laid on the table, and does not apply immediately after a motion is tabled. It can also be taken from the table at the next meeting.

Whenever the motion to take back is adopted by the house, the motion comes up before the house along with everything adhering to it, at the time it was tabled. The effect is that a similar situation that existed when the main motion was tabled is brought back.

For instance, when the motion "Lay on Table" was adopted, the principal motion before the assembly was to "amend" the constitution and the subsidiary motion was to amend the main motion. On the adoption of the motion "Take back from the Table", the principal motion as well as the subsidiary motion is brought back before the assembly.

A motion "To Take back from the Table" cannot be reconsidered. It can always be brought up again, after it is defeated. An interesting aspect is that when this motion on its adoption brings back the "tabled motion" for consideration, such previously tabled motion can be "laid on the table" once again.

The motion to "Take back from the Table", cannot interrupt the speaker and requires a Secunder. It is not debatable and not amendable. The moment it is proposed and seconded, the Chairman has to ascertain the vote of the house.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I move that we take back from the table the motion xxx which has been tabled earlier"

To Reconsider : The purpose of this motion is to "reconsider" or "review" a previously considered motion. Its effect is intense and peculiar. In the sense, even the making of the motion has a higher rank than its consideration. For a certain period, it suspends all actions relating to the motion to be reconsidered, awaiting the result of the vote. (No action must be initiated on the earlier considered motion until the motion to reconsider is disposed of unsuccessfully. In other words, the effect of the original vote is suspended). This is in contrast to the "Motion to Rescind" which may be made at any later meeting, but until passed, has no effect on the original decision.

The effect of the motion to reconsider, when adopted, is that it brings before the assembly the original motion in the exact position it occupied before it was voted upon.

Motion to "Reconsider" must be proposed by the member, who earlier voted "in favour of the result" of the main motion. The proposer must have voted on the prevailing side. In simple logic, the member proposing this motion is actually "reconsidering or changing" his/her stand on the decision taken. Any member can second the motion.

The motion to "Reconsider" is made at the same meeting where the original motion was disposed of. It is also made at the next succeeding day of the same meeting or after a recess but before the implementation of the main motion commences. A motion that is adopted by the house, and action on it is initiated, a proposal to reconsider such an adopted motion cannot be brought up. The votes on motions like "Adjourn" or "Recess" or "Suspend the rules of Order"; or "Orders of the Day" etc, cannot be reconsidered. The central principle is that an action that has been initiated cannot be reversed by this motion.

The motion to “Reconsider” is made while any question is pending. The Chairman allows this motion even if another member has been granted the floor. After the house votes to Adjourn but the Chairman does not give ruling on adjournment, the motion to “Reconsider” can be made.

The motion to “Reconsider” requires simple majority. People are often mistaken that the motion to reconsider requires a higher majority. The logic is clear – that unless one person who has changed sides or is now reconsidering his/her earlier decision proposes to reconsider, such motion cannot have any change in the result. This motion cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a seconder, and is not amendable. However, its “debatable” status varies. It is debatable to the extent that the motion being reconsidered is debatable.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: “Mr Chairman, I move to reconsider the decision of the house on the motion”

To Rescind or Cancel or Change Previous Action : The purpose of this motion is to cancel all action on a previously adopted motion. Where the house has already decided on a motion and has not initiated its implementation, at a later meeting or at a later part of the same meeting, this motion can be adopted by the house to cancel the previous action. The key qualification is that no action must have been taken pursuant to the earlier decision on the motion or where it is not possible to undo.

A simple majority is required to rescind, when the notice of rescinding or annulling or canceling the main motion is given to the membership either at the previous meeting or in the notice of the meeting. However, when this motion comes up before the house, without such notice, the majority required goes up to 2/3rds.

The motion to “Rescind” can only be brought up before the assembly, when no other business is pending.

The previous votes that resulted in the decision of the main motion cannot be rescinded after some action has been taken that cannot be undone. For instance, where a resignation has been accepted and the membership terminated, or where a person has been elected to an office, or where a person has been expelled from office or membership. Such expulsion can be reversed by restoring the person to membership or office in the same manner as someone is brought into membership or office.

In some cases, where objectionable resolutions were adopted by the house, the same were not only rescinded but the house had adopted a resolution to expunge the matter from the record. The majority required to expunge from record is the majority of the total membership, notwithstanding that the quorum is present and the proposal to expunge is adopted unanimously.

Motion to Rescind can be made at any later meeting, but unless it is adopted, it has no effect on the original decision. (This is a variation from the "motion to Reconsider")

The motion to "Rescind" requires a simple majority where notice of such motion to rescind is given in the previous meeting or in the notice of the current meeting. The majority goes up to 2/3rds when there is no notice given. This motion cannot interrupt the speaker, requires a seconder. It is debatable and amendable.

Guideline for a member to state this motion: "Mr Chairman, I move to Rescind the motion .. previously decided upon"

*Property of the House
is a status given to a motion after
it is duly proposed and seconded,
and thereafter restated by the
Chairman for placing the subject
before the house for consideration.*

Conclusion

Motions published in this book are only discussed from the perspective of the meetings of associations that are voluntary in nature. They are meant for members who require guidance on the conduct of meetings. They do not form all the motions as specified in the “Roberts Rules of Order”. Experience has proved that these motions are adequate to organize orderly Conferences, General Body meetings of Clubs / Associations / and large Forums.

For a detailed version of what is briefed here, one can refer to the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order. Should there be any conflict in the contents between this publication and the Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised), the latter shall prevail. The opinions are given based on experience.

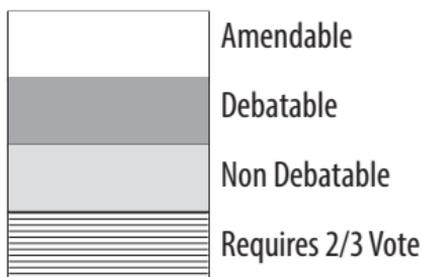
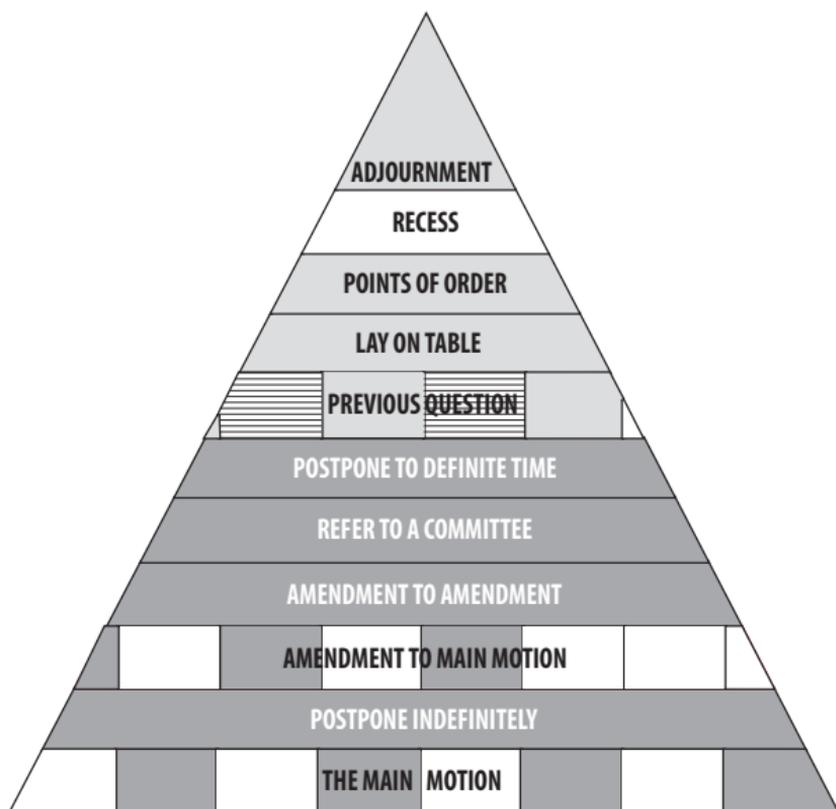
Unless one practices these procedures at meetings, and consistently refers the “Rules of Order, one cannot master this skill and emerge as a good parliamentarian.

Wish you success.

Sunil Kumar R

sunilkindia@gmail.com

Order of Precedence Triangle



Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order*

PURPOSE	YOU SAY	INTERRUPT SPEAKER	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE
Close Meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take Break (Recess)	I move to recess for ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Register Complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
Create or follow Agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Close Debate and Decide	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
To Limit or to extend Debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a Certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to Committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To Amend a Motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill Main Motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Bring Business before Assembly (Main/Principal motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

PURPOSE	YOU SAY	INTERRUPT SPEAKER	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE
Enforce Rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
Disagreement with Chairman's ruling	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
Suspend Rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Not to consider Main Motion	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Divide Motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Demand Vote clarity	I move for a rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
Seek information on Parliamentary law or Procedural matter.	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
Request for Information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

PURPOSE	YOU SAY	INTERRUPT SPEAKER	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE
Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority with notice
Reconsider previously decided Motion	I move to reconsider ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

LADDER OF MOTIONS IN ORDER OF RANK

