

Parliamentary Committee on Information and Technology

August 22, 2020

The row over Facebook content controversy intensified with BJP MP and member of the Parliamentary Committee on Information and Technology demanding the removal of Congress leader Shashi Tharoor as Chairman of the panel alleging that the committee is being run unprofessionally and to serve his own political agenda. He recalled Mr. Tharoor's tweet criticising the **move to refer the Personal Data Protection Bill to a Joint Select Committee instead of the IT panel as a dangerous precedent.**

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The exponential growth in the sphere of activities of the executive and the growing complexities of governance have resulted in the **Parliament relying on its committees to a greater extent for ensuring accountability of the executive to the legislature.** As the Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) are the specialized entities mandated with the onerous and intricate task of Ministry/ Department specific oversight, the Parliament transacts a great volume of its business through these Committees.

The Standing Committee on Information Technology, one of the 24 Departmentally Related Committees in existence, is constituted under Rule 331C of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The following Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India are under its jurisdiction:

- Ministry of Communications-Department of Posts and Department of Telecommunications
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

The **Committee consists of 31 members; 21 members from Lok Sabha, nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha nominated by the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha.** The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst the members of the Committee from Lok Sabha. The term of office of the members of the Committee does not exceed one year.

The Committee have been entrusted with the following functions

- to consider the Demands for Grants of the concerned Ministries/ Departments and make reports on the same to the Houses
- to examine such Bills pertaining to the concerned Ministries/ Departments as are referred to the Committee by the Speaker, Lok Sabha or the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha as the case may be, and make reports thereon
- to consider Annual Reports of the concerned Ministries/Departments and make reports thereon
- to consider national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses, if referred to the Committee by the Speaker, Lok Sabha or the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha as the case may be, and make reports thereon.