THE PRIVILEGE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE PENAL JURISDICTION OF PARLIAMENT REVISITED

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ABSTRACT

Freedom of speech and debate of members of parliament is one of the most essential privileges. Whatever is done by parliament is based on the usefulness of the speech of members in the cause of a debate. Therefore, if parliament is to realise its objective in a democratic society, the freedom of its members in the cause of debate or proceedings should be clothed with the wool of privilege. If the speech of parliamentary members made in the course of parliamentary proceedings could be questioned or challenged, every Member of Parliament would be under the apprehension of the way he speaks; and wherever that is the position, the full or unqualified intention and the suggestion of a member could not be achieved. Consequently, there would be a low return in the process of parliamentary proceedings. This is the essence of this privilege. In addition to the privilege of freedom of speech of members of Parliament, the Parliament itself is authorised to exercise penal jurisdiction. However, the exercise of the parliamentary privilege of freedom of speech and the exercise of penal jurisdiction should consider the rights of others.

Keywords: Parliamentary Privilege, Penal Jurisdiction, Human Rights