



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalsivam Kamarajar"

# Parliamentary Disruptions in India: Declining Legislative Scrutiny, Accountability and Deliberative Capacity of Parliament

Published On: 18-08-2026

## Recent Development: Persistently Low Parliamentary Productivity:

- Following the **Monsoon Session 2026**, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister reported productivity of only **19% in Lok Sabha and 39% in Rajya Sabha**, highlighting renewed concerns over repeated disruptions and the declining effective utilisation of parliamentary time.
- The Monsoon Session 2026 was marked by repeated adjournments and Opposition protests, despite the passage of **12 Bills**, demonstrating the distinction between legislative output and meaningful parliamentary deliberation.
- An all-party meeting was convened before the session to seek cooperation from political parties and facilitate the smooth functioning of Parliament, reflecting the importance of **consensus-building** in parliamentary functioning.
- The issue is significant because parliamentary productivity measures not merely the number of Bills passed, but the extent to which Parliament performs its constitutional functions of **legislation, deliberation, financial control and executive accountability**.

## Parliamentary Disruptions in India: Meaning and Constitutional Context:

### *Meaning of Parliamentary Disruption:*

- **Parliamentary disruption** refers to repeated interruptions, adjournments, protests, sloganeering, demonstrations or other forms of disorder that prevent the Houses from conducting their scheduled business.
- Disruption can serve as a legitimate democratic instrument when the **Opposition seeks to draw attention to urgent public issues**, but prolonged disruption becomes problematic when it prevents debate and scrutiny altogether.
- Parliamentary democracy requires a balance between the **right to dissent** and the **duty to deliberate**, because neither unrestricted obstruction nor unrestricted majoritarianism is consistent with effective parliamentary government.

### *Constitutional Role of Parliament:*

- Parliament performs four interconnected functions: **legislation, executive accountability, financial control and representation of citizens and States**.
- **Article 105** provides parliamentary privileges, including freedom of speech in Parliament, subject to the Constitution and the rules and standing orders regulating parliamentary proceedings.
- **Article 118** empowers each House to make rules for regulating its procedure and conduct of business.
- The **Presiding Officers** therefore possess an important institutional responsibility to maintain order while ensuring adequate opportunities for legitimate debate.

**Kamaraj IAS Academy**

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- The constitutional objective is not merely to pass legislation but to ensure that laws emerge through **deliberation, scrutiny and accountability**.

## Historical Pattern of Parliamentary Disruptions: Major Examples:

### *Major Disruption Episodes:*

- **Winter Session 2010:** Protests over the **2G spectrum allocation controversy** and demands for a Joint Parliamentary Committee resulted in an almost complete washout; Lok Sabha functioned for only **5.5%** and Rajya Sabha for **2.4%** of available time.
- **Winter Session 2013:** Disruptions relating primarily to the **bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh**, along with other political issues, reduced productivity to **6% in Lok Sabha and 19% in Rajya Sabha**.
- **Monsoon Session 2015:** Repeated disruptions made the session one of the least productive in the preceding 15 years; Lok Sabha functioned for approximately **48%** and Rajya Sabha for only **9%** of available time.
- **Winter Session 2016:** Protests over **demonetisation** reduced productivity to **15% in Lok Sabha and 18% in Rajya Sabha**, making it the least productive Lok Sabha session of the 16th Lok Sabha at that point.
- **Budget Session 2018:** Disruptions relating to issues including the **Cauvery dispute, Andhra Pradesh's special-category-state demand and banking-related controversies** contributed to low parliamentary productivity.
- **Monsoon Session 2021:** Protests over the **Pegasus surveillance allegations and farm laws** reduced productivity to **21% in Lok Sabha and 29% in Rajya Sabha**; Lok Sabha worked for only 21 hours during the session.
- **Budget Session 2023:** The **Adani controversy, Rahul Gandhi's remarks abroad and his subsequent disqualification** were among the major political issues during a highly disrupted session; Lok Sabha functioned for **33%** and Rajya Sabha for **24%** of scheduled time.

## Declining Legislative Productivity in India: Institutional Trends:

### *Fewer Parliamentary Sitzings:*

- The **17th Lok Sabha** held only **274 sittings** across 15 sessions, the fewest sittings among all full-term Lok Sabhas.
- **11 of its 15 sessions were adjourned early**, resulting in **40 scheduled sittings** not taking place.
- Across its full term, Lok Sabha functioned for **88%** and Rajya Sabha for **73%** of their scheduled time, showing that overall productivity can conceal sharp disruptions during individual sessions.
- The average number of annual sittings has declined substantially over the decades, reducing the time available for detailed legislative and policy deliberation.

### *Declining Committee Scrutiny:*

- The proportion of Bills referred to parliamentary committees declined from **71% during the 15th Lok Sabha** to **25–27% during the 16th Lok Sabha** and approximately **16% during the 17th Lok Sabha**.
- Parliamentary committees provide specialised scrutiny, obtain stakeholder inputs and facilitate **cross-party deliberation**, making their reduced use a major concern for legislative quality.
- During the 17th Lok Sabha, only **16% of Bills** were referred to committees for detailed scrutiny.

### *Reduced Time for Legislative Debate:*

- During the 17th Lok Sabha, **58% of Bills** were passed within two weeks of introduction, while **35% of Bills in Lok Sabha and 34% in Rajya Sabha** were passed with less than one hour of discussion.
- During the 17th Lok Sabha, only **9% of Bills** were passed with at least one instance of recorded voting, excluding Constitutional Amendment Bills where recorded voting is mandatory.

- These trends raise concerns about whether legislative speed is being achieved at the expense of **deliberative scrutiny and amendment-based improvement**.

### ***Declining Scrutiny of Public Finance:***

- Parliamentary disruption can reduce opportunities for detailed examination of **Demands for Grants, taxation proposals and government expenditure**.
- During the 17th Lok Sabha, the annual Budget was discussed for an average of only **35 hours in Lok Sabha**, while around **80% of the Budget was voted without discussion** between 2019 and 2023.
- Financial scrutiny is particularly important because Parliament exercises constitutional control over **public expenditure and taxation**.

### **Why Parliamentary Disruptions Matter: Democratic and Institutional Consequences:**

#### ***Legislative Scrutiny Suffers:***

- Disruptions reduce the time available for **Bill-by-Bill debate, clause-by-clause examination and consideration of amendments**.
- Reduced committee referral further limits opportunities for technical scrutiny and consultation with stakeholders.

#### ***Executive Accountability Weakens:***

- **Question Hour** is one of Parliament's principal mechanisms for holding the executive accountable for policies, expenditure and administrative decisions.
- During the Monsoon Session 2025, Question Hour functioned for only **23% of scheduled time in Lok Sabha and 6% in Rajya Sabha**.
- When Question Hour is repeatedly disrupted, Members lose opportunities to ask supplementary questions and demand immediate explanations from Ministers.

#### ***Public Money Is Wasted:***

- Parliamentary time is a **public resource** financed through taxpayer revenue.
- Persistent disruptions can result in substantial scheduled time being lost without equivalent legislative or deliberative output.

#### ***Federal Concerns Receive Limited Space:***

- **Rajya Sabha** represents the States and therefore provides an important institutional forum for discussing State-specific concerns and federal issues.
- Disruptions in Rajya Sabha can consequently weaken the parliamentary expression of **cooperative federalism**.

#### ***Democratic Deliberation Declines:***

- Parliament is intended to reconcile competing interests through **debate, negotiation, persuasion and voting**.
- Continuous disruption shifts political contestation from substantive deliberation towards procedural confrontation.

### **Key Causes and Structural Concerns: Why Disruptions Persist:**

#### ***Political Polarisation:***

**Kamaraj IAS Academy**

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477** / Whatsapp : **09710729833**

- Increasing **political polarisation** can reduce the willingness of rival parties to negotiate on parliamentary business.
- High-intensity political competition can encourage parties to use disruption as a visible method of mobilising public opinion.

### ***Disruption as a Political Strategy:***

- Opposition parties may use disruption when they believe that normal parliamentary procedures provide insufficient political visibility for issues they consider urgent.
- However, when disruption becomes routine, it can weaken the very parliamentary mechanisms through which those issues could be debated.

### ***Limited Institutional Space for Opposition:***

- The Opposition requires predictable opportunities to raise **urgent public issues, short-duration discussions, motions and matters of public importance**.
- Inadequate accommodation of Opposition priorities can increase incentives for procedural confrontation.

### ***Weak Committee-Based Scrutiny:***

- Declining referral of Bills to committees reduces opportunities for **non-partisan technical examination and consensus-building**.
- Committees can absorb contentious issues away from the floor of the House and allow detailed examination without continuous political confrontation.

### ***Inadequate Incentives for Maintaining Order:***

- Political costs associated with disruption may be limited when disorder provides greater public visibility than substantive debate.
- Effective parliamentary reform therefore requires stronger institutional incentives for **constructive participation and orderly dissent**.

### ***Executive-Legislative Imbalance:***

- When legislative business is compressed into limited sitting periods, there can be greater pressure to pass Bills quickly after disruptions.
- This can create a cycle in which disruption reduces available time, reduced time increases legislative compression and legislative compression further weakens scrutiny.

### **Parliamentary Committees: An Important Solution:**

#### ***Role of Parliamentary Committees:***

- Parliamentary committees provide a relatively **less confrontational and more specialised forum** for examining legislation and government functioning.
- They can examine Bills, departmental budgets, policies, delegated legislation and government responses to previous recommendations.
- During the 17th Lok Sabha, parliamentary committees held approximately **1,700 meetings**, demonstrating their continuing institutional importance despite declining Bill referrals.

#### ***Why Committee Referral Should Increase:***

- Committees enable detailed examination that is difficult to undertake on the floor of a House because of limited parliamentary time.

- They allow **stakeholder consultation, expert evidence, inter-party discussion and technical scrutiny**.
- Mandatory or convention-based referral of important Bills could improve legislative quality without preventing Parliament from responding quickly to genuine emergencies.

### Way Forward: Strengthening Parliamentary Functioning:

#### ***Build Greater Political Consensus:***

- The Government should provide adequate opportunities for Opposition concerns through the **Business Advisory Committee and other parliamentary mechanisms**.
- Regular all-party consultations before and during sessions can reduce avoidable confrontation and facilitate agreement on the legislative calendar.

#### ***Protect Question Hour:***

- **Question Hour** should be protected as a core mechanism of executive accountability.
- Political parties should develop bipartisan norms against deliberately preventing Members from questioning Ministers.

#### ***Strengthen Parliamentary Committees:***

- More important Bills should undergo detailed **standing committee or select committee scrutiny**, particularly when they involve complex economic, technological, constitutional or social questions.
- Committee reports should receive adequate time for consideration on the floor of the Houses.

#### ***Create Time-Bound Discussion Mechanisms:***

- Dedicated parliamentary slots can be created for **major national issues, State-specific concerns and urgent matters of public importance**.
- Such mechanisms can reduce the incentive to use continuous disruption merely to secure discussion.

#### ***Enforce Rules Impartially:***

- Presiding Officers should apply parliamentary disciplinary provisions **consistently and impartially**.
- Legitimate dissent should remain protected while conduct that prevents the House from functioning should attract proportionate consequences.

#### ***Increase Parliamentary Sitting Days:***

- India should consider increasing the number of annual parliamentary sitting days to provide sufficient time for **legislation, budget scrutiny, questions and policy debates**.
- Greater sitting time can reduce pressure to complete large legislative agendas within short sessions.

#### ***Promote Parliamentary Ethics:***

- Political parties should develop **bipartisan parliamentary norms** against persistent obstruction, personal attacks, sloganeering and deliberate disruption.
- Parliamentary privileges should be exercised alongside a strong commitment to **institutional responsibility and constitutional morality**.

#### ***Strengthen Institutional Accountability:***

- Parliamentary productivity should be assessed through multiple indicators, including **functioning time, Question Hour performance, quality of legislative debate, committee scrutiny and financial oversight**,

rather than merely the number of Bills passed.

- The objective should be to measure **effective parliamentary work**, not simply legislative throughput.

### UPSC Perspective: GS-Wise Relevance:

#### *GS Paper II – Indian Polity and Governance:*

- The issue directly relates to **Parliament, parliamentary committees, executive accountability, parliamentary privileges, constitutional institutions, Opposition rights and democratic functioning**.
- Relevant constitutional provisions include **Articles 105, 118 and 93**, along with the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the two Houses.

#### *GS Paper II – Federalism:*

- The functioning of **Rajya Sabha** is particularly important because it represents the States and acts as an institutional component of India's federal structure.
- Parliamentary disruptions can reduce the effective representation of **State interests in national law-making**.

#### *GS Paper II – Accountability and Transparency:*

- Disruptions can weaken **Question Hour, discussions, committee scrutiny and financial oversight**, thereby reducing executive accountability.
- Parliamentary accountability complements other mechanisms such as **judicial review, the Comptroller and Auditor General, parliamentary committees and public scrutiny**.

#### *Essay:*

- The issue can be connected with themes such as “**Dissent as the strength of democracy**”, “**Majoritarianism versus deliberative democracy**” and “**Institutional efficiency versus democratic debate**”.
- A balanced essay should distinguish between **legitimate protest** and **persistent obstruction**.

### Value Addition for UPSC: Data, Constitutional Provisions and Concepts:

#### *Key Data Points:*

- **19%**: Reported productivity of **Lok Sabha** during the Monsoon Session 2026.
- **39%**: Reported productivity of **Rajya Sabha** during the Monsoon Session 2026.
- **274 sittings**: Number of sittings held by the **17th Lok Sabha**, the lowest among full-term Lok Sabhas.
- **16%**: Share of Bills referred to parliamentary committees for detailed scrutiny during the **17th Lok Sabha**.
- **11.44%**: Not applicable to parliamentary productivity; this figure belongs to manufacturing employment and should not be confused with parliamentary data.
- **23% and 6%**: Question Hour functioned for these proportions of scheduled time in **Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**, respectively, during the Monsoon Session 2025.
- **21% and 29%**: Productivity of **Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**, respectively, during the Monsoon Session 2021.
- **33% and 24%**: Productivity of **Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**, respectively, during the Budget Session 2023.

#### *Important Constitutional Provisions:*

- **Article 105**: Parliamentary privileges and freedom of speech in Parliament.
- **Article 118**: Power of each House to make rules regulating its procedure and conduct of business.
- **Article 93**: Election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha.

#### **Kamaraj IAS Academy**

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040  
Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- **Article 75(3):** Collective responsibility of the Council of Ministers to Lok Sabha, forming an important basis for executive accountability.
- **Article 79:** Establishes Parliament as consisting of the **President, Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha**.