



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

1. Safeguarding Parliamentary Democracy – Polity

Lok Sabha Speaker highlighted those frequent disruptions in Parliament and State Legislatures pose a serious challenge to democratic institutions threatening their constitutional effectiveness.

1. The 17th Lok Sabha (2019–2024) held only 274 sittings across 15 sessions, the lowest for any full-term Lok Sabha in Indian history reflecting declining legislative productivity.
2. During Monsoon Session 2025, Lok Sabha functioned for only 29% of its scheduled time while Rajya Sabha functioned for only 34% demonstrating severe productivity loss.

1. Fundamental Role of Legislatures in Democracy

Law-Making Authority

1. Legislatures enact laws governing the country and addressing emerging social, economic, and political challenges providing legal framework for societal governance.
2. Parliamentary law-making reflects collective will have elected representatives translating public mandates into binding legal frameworks.

Executive Accountability

1. Legislatures hold the executive accountable through debates, Question Hour, motions, and committee scrutiny ensuring checks and balances.
2. Without effective legislative functioning, executive accountability weakens creating democratic deficit and unchecked executive power.

Representation of People's Interests

1. Legislatures provide platform for elected representatives to articulate concerns and aspirations of citizens ensuring democratic voice.
2. Representative character of legislatures legitimizes laws and policies by reflecting diverse population perspectives.

Policy Deliberation

1. Legislatures facilitate informed discussions on public policies, budgets, and developmental priorities enabling quality governance.
2. Deliberative function helps identify policy gaps, unintended consequences, and improvements before legislation is enacted.

2. Understanding Parliamentary Disruptions

Definition and Scope

1. Parliamentary and legislative disruptions refer to repeated interruptions, adjournments, protests, and disorderly conduct preventing legislatures from effectively performing constitutional functions.
2. While disruptions have existed since early decades of independence, frequency and intensity have increased since 1990s with rise of coalition politics.

Declining Legislative Productivity Data

1. Bills referred to Parliamentary Standing Committees declined from 71% during 15th Lok Sabha (2009–14) to 27% during 16th Lok Sabha (2014–19) and around 16% during 17th Lok Sabha (2019–24).
2. This declining committee referral trend indicates rushed legislation without adequate scrutiny undermining quality of laws.

3. The 17th Lok Sabha's record-low 274 sittings represent fundamental failure of democratic accountability mechanisms.

Causes of Frequent Disruptions

Political Polarisation

1. Increasing political confrontation leads to disruptions becoming preferred mode of protest rather than substantive debate.
2. Party-based politics prioritizes electoral positioning over constructive legislative engagement.

Search for Public Attention

1. Political parties use disruptions to attract media coverage and highlight contentious issues as electoral strategy.
2. Disruptions generate television coverage providing visibility disproportionate to legislative debate.

Contentious Issues and Lack of Consensus

1. Key policy matters including economic reforms, minority rights, and constitutional amendments frequently lead to walkouts and protests.
2. Laws like Farm Bills (2020), Citizenship Amendment Act (2019), and GST rollout (2017) triggered significant walkouts and protests.

Weak Adherence to Parliamentary Norms

1. Declining respect for parliamentary conventions and decorum contributes to disorderly proceedings.
2. Cultural shift away from traditional parliamentary values undermines institutional effectiveness.

Limited Consensus-Building

1. Insufficient dialogue among political parties results in legislative deadlocks and disruptions.
2. Opposition parties are often excluded from policy formulation stage creating adversarial rather than collaborative environments.

3.Impact of Disruptions on Democracy

Weakening Executive Oversight

1. Repeated adjournments diminish effectiveness of accountability mechanisms such as Question Hour and parliamentary debates.
2. Executive functions without adequate parliamentary oversight when disruptions prevent scrutiny of government actions.

Reduced Legislative Productivity

1. Disruptions result in loss of valuable working hours and delay passage of important legislation.
2. Critical bills addressing public welfare, economic development, and national security are delayed.

Eroding Public Trust

1. Persistent disorderly conduct lowers citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and elected representatives.
2. Trust deficit weakens democratic legitimacy and creates cynicism about electoral participation.

Increasing Financial Costs

1. Frequent interruptions lead to wastage of public financial resources spent on conducting legislative sessions.
2. Each disrupted session costs taxpayers' significant sums while delivering no legislative output.

4.Way Forward

1. **Enforce Parliamentary Discipline** – Legislative rules and codes of conduct should be strictly enforced discouraging disruptive behaviour.

2. **Strengthen Committee Systems** – Parliamentary committees should be empowered to undertake detailed examination of policies and legislation restoring 71% committee referral rates.
3. **Encourage Constructive Opposition** – Political parties should prioritize substantive debate and policy engagement over obstructionist tactics.
4. **Foster Citizen Engagement** – Greater public participation can improve transparency, accountability, and trust in democratic institutions.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/frequent-disruptions-in-legislatures-pose-a-serious-challenge-to-democratic-institutions-om-birla/article71081572.ece>