



**A GUIDE TO
PARLIAMENTARY
INTERVENTIONS**

Lok Sabha

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Role of a Parliamentarian

Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the hopes and aspirations of the people of India. They play a significant part in furthering the social and economic welfare of citizens. Work done by Parliament impacts everyday facets of a citizen's life such as health, education, home ownership, transport, and public safety. MPs have four key roles:

- (i) Overseeing the work of the government and holding it accountable to ensure effective governance,
- (ii) Representing their constituents and raising matters of public importance,
- (iii) Debating and passing laws that govern the country,
- (iv) Financial oversight to ensure effective allocation of public funds.

These roles are not independent of each other and on any typical day, an MP could be using one or more interventions to fulfil these roles.

MPs carry out their work in Parliament on the floor of the House as well as through Parliamentary Committees. In the House, they hold the government accountable by asking questions and raising matters of public importance and bringing them to the attention of the government. They also participate in debates and discussions initiated by the government. Individual MPs can also introduce legislation and resolutions (called Private Members' Business). In Committees, MPs engage deeply on important subject matters, call upon experts to solicit their views, and try to build consensus across party lines on various policy matters.

In Lok Sabha, interventions that MPs can make are regulated by its Rules of Procedure. This primer seeks to assist newly elected Lok Sabha MPs understand the functioning of the House so they can exercise their role more effectively. It also seeks to highlight procedural aspects of the interventions.

Lok Sabha: An Overview

At the commencement of Lok Sabha, Members of the House elect a Speaker and Deputy Speaker to preside over the proceedings. In the Speaker's absence, the Deputy Speaker presides over the House. When both Speaker or Deputy Speaker are not present, a member from the Panel of Chairpersons is requested by the Speaker or Deputy Speaker to preside over the House. This panel of 10 Members from Lok Sabha is nominated from time to time by the Speaker.

Participation in the House

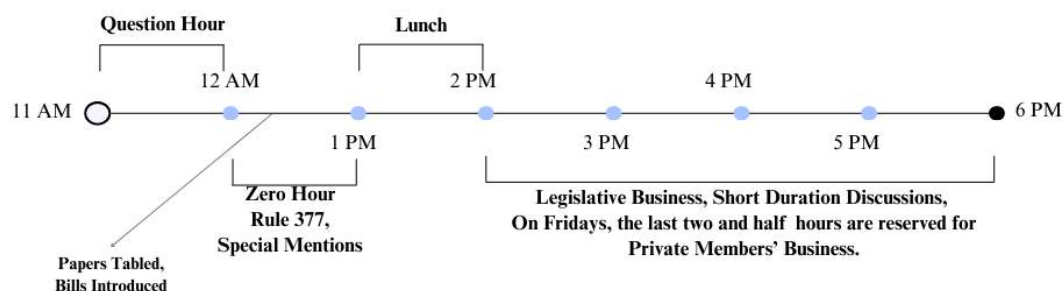
Members participate in the House in broadly two ways. In certain proceedings, such as Question Hour, raising matters of public importance, and private member business, MPs can raise issues independently. These matters are chosen for discussion either through a ballot, or at the Speaker's discretion. In other proceedings like debates on national issues, and discussions on government Bills and budgets, the time is allocated party-wise and the party leadership decides who will participate in such proceedings.

The House **Business Advisory Committee (BAC)** recommends the time to be allocated for business in the House. This Committee has Members from the ruling and opposition parties.

A typical day in Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha begins work at 11 am and is ordinarily scheduled to work till 6 pm. The first half of the day is reserved for MPs to raise issues and ask questions in their individual capacity. In the second half, typically, government business is taken up. This could be discussion on Bills, budgets, or longer debates. Every week, one half day (typically on a Friday) is reserved for Private Members' Business.

Figure 1: A typical day in Lok Sabha



Proceedings of the House

Proceedings in the House are guided by its Rules of Procedure. These Rules require that Members give prior intimation to the Secretariat/Speaker for asking questions, raising issues, and initiating or participating in debates. This is called “giving notice”. Each intervention has a different notice period. This intimation can be submitted manually, or digitally using the member’s e-portal.

In some matters, the Speaker can exercise his discretion. For example, the discretion to allow an MP to raise a matter of public importance at short notice rests with the Speaker.

Decision-making in the House

All decisions in the House are posed as motions, which are put to vote in the House. Typically, the voting is done orally with Members supporting the motion saying “aye” and those opposing the motion saying “no”. The motion is accepted if the Speaker is of the opinion that more Members are in favour of the motion. However, if any Member is unsatisfied with Speaker’s decision, they can ask the Speaker to hold a recorded vote, called a division. Once this demand is raised, the Speaker must hold a division, in which the vote of each Member is recorded.

Important Parliamentary Documents

List of Business: The schedule and items of business to be taken up on a given day. It is circulated two days in advance to Members.

Revised List of Business: The revised schedule, which is often circulated a day before the sitting of the House.

Supplementary List of Business: Lists additional items of business to be taken up the same day. It is made available on the day of sitting.

Bulletin 1: A brief record of the proceedings that have taken place in the House at each of its sittings. It is published after each day of sitting.

Bulletin 2: Contains information on any matter relating to the business of the House, such as reference of Bills to Committees, changes in Committee membership, and matters related to protocol. It is circulated to Members as and when it is published.

PARTICIPATING IN THE HOUSE

Government Oversight

Introduction

In a Parliamentary democracy, the government is answerable to Parliament for its actions. Members have several devices at their disposal to scrutinise the work of the government. These include asking questions on the government's policies, debating on national issues, discussing and passing laws, and approving the spending of public funds. In this section, we discuss some key interventions that MPs can undertake on the floor of the House.

Asking Questions

This section provides an overview of the ways in which MPs can hold the government accountable by asking questions in their individual capacity.

Parliamentary Questions

Lok Sabha usually begins the day's proceedings with Question Hour. Members use Question Hour to hold the government accountable for its policies and actions. They can also use this device to seek response from the government on important matters impacting their constituents. During this Hour, a Member can ask a Minister any question related to the implementation of laws and policies under the purview of their Ministry. There are three different types of questions: Starred, Unstarred, and Short Notice Questions.

Starred Question: These questions receive an oral response by the Minister-in-charge. MPs can also ask follow-up questions, called supplementary questions.

Unstarred Question: These receive a written reply from the Ministry. The notice format to file Starred and Unstarred Questions is the same, Starred Questions are distinguished by an asterisk.

Choosing between Starred Questions and Unstarred Questions

Starred Questions are better suited to inquire about the government's views on national issues and its policy inclination, as they allow Members to seek further explanation by asking supplementary questions. After the Minister's response, the Member can ask up to two supplementary questions. The Speaker can also permit other MPs present to ask supplementary questions.

Unstarred Questions do not allow for follow-up questions. Therefore, they may be more conducive for getting answers on queries related to data or information.

Preparing for supplementary questions

Typically, since the first 5-6 questions listed for a day are answered in the one hour allocated for Question Hour, it may be preferable to focus on the first few questions while preparing to ask supplementary questions. The list of questions is available five days in advance, and answers to Starred Questions are made available at 10:30 AM on the day the questions are to be answered.

Short Notice Questions: These questions allow MPs to question the government over matters of urgent public importance for which the prescribed notice period of 15 days may be too long. Like Starred Questions, Short Notice Questions are answered orally followed by supplementary questions. Admitted questions are usually taken up after the end of Question Hour. This device is rarely used; no such question has been admitted since 2014.

Illustration: On a Starred Question over Central support to states for expenditure on asset creation, Members used supplementary questions to also highlight delay in release of GST compensation funds. They urged the Minister to devise a new way to avoid administrative delays.

Members also asked Unstarred Questions on issues like data on electrification of households, the amount of agriculture subsidies given in a certain period, and funds allocated to flood affected areas.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limit per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Starred Questions (Rule 33)	15 days	One per day	To be marked with an asterisk. Maximum 20 selected per day	Ballot
Unstarred Questions (Rule 33)	15 days	Five per day (if no Starred Questions are asked, otherwise four)	Maximum 230 selected per day	Ballot
Short Notice Questions (Rule 54)	Less than 10 days	-	Notice should be accompanied with a reason for short notice	Speaker's discretion

Using debates and motions to raise matters

MPs can raise and debate various issues in the House to hold the government accountable or bring matters to the attention of the government. Some of these issues are raised through motions and voted upon in the House. The House may also discuss issues without voting upon them. Issues may be raised by MPs on their own initiative or may be identified by the Business Advisory Committee. In case of the latter, political parties decide which MPs will participate in the discussion.

We discuss the devices that MPs may use to raise issues on their own initiative.

Zero Hour

The hour immediately following Question Hour is popularly known as Zero Hour. This period is usually used to raise matters that are urgent and cannot wait for the notice period required under other procedures. Submissions made during this hour are not specifically listed under a rule, but appear in the proceedings as Matters of Urgent Public Importance.

Illustration: In 2023, a Member highlighted the impact of drought on farmers. The Member flagged the lack of a proper canal system in Andhra Pradesh, and the need to implement modern technologies for farming.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Matters of urgent public importance	Before 9 am	-	Notice given to Speaker	Ballot

Laying of Papers: At the beginning of Zero Hour, papers such as Annual Reports of Ministries and Public Sector Undertakings, reports of Parliamentary Committees, and government notifications are laid on the table of the House. These reports are in public domain after they are tabled in the House.

Calling Attention

Any MP can call the attention of a Minister to a matter of urgent public importance, to which the Minister gives a response. MPs can ask clarifying questions after the Minister's response, which the Minister must answer.

Illustration: Between 2019 and 2024, MPs called the attention of Ministers to issues like women empowerment, drug abuse in the country, and promotion of sports. However, the Speaker converted these to Short Duration Discussions to facilitate a larger discussion.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Calling Attention (Rule 197)	Before 10 am	Two notices per day	Admitted notices are valid for one week. Up to five MPs can ask clarifying questions after Minister's response. Up to two matters can be raised in a day.	Ballot

Matters under Rule 377

Matters which cannot be raised under Rules relating to Questions, Short Notice Questions, Calling Attention, etc. can be raised under Rule 377.

Illustration: Noting the shift towards online education during the Covid-19 pandemic, a Member raised the issue of internet accessibility under Rule 377. He urged the government to make digital learning tools available for low income households by redirecting funds towards digital infrastructure for students.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Matters which are not a point of order (Rule 377)	Notices received from start of the week to 10 am of last day of week remain valid for that week	One per week	Text of notice cannot exceed 250 words	Ballot

Half-an-Hour Discussion

If an MP feels that an answer to a Starred or Unstarred Question needs further explanation, they can raise a Half-an-Hour Discussion. Under this device, an MP is allowed to make a short statement on the floor of the House. The concerned Minister replies. After the minister's response, a maximum of four other MPs can ask further questions. No voting or formal motion takes place in this intervention.

Illustration: In 2022, a Half-an-Hour discussion was raised on the issue of beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin. Citing a point raised by the Minister during Question Hour, a Member drew the attention of the House towards families that were eligible under the scheme but could not be enlisted.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Half-an-Hour Discussion (Rule 55)	Three days	-	Notice should be accompanied by the reason for raising it. MPs who want to ask further questions need to give notice before sitting begins; Allowed for three days a week.	Speaker's discretion

Private Member Resolutions

Any MP, who is not a Minister, can move a resolution in the form of a recommendation, declaration of opinion, approval or disapproval of an act or policy of the government. It can also be used to bring an important matter to the attention of the government. Such resolutions are known as Private Member Resolutions. Resolutions can be used to express the opinion of the House in the form of a vote. The last two and a half hours of sitting on Fridays alternate between Private Member Resolutions and Private Member Bills.

Illustration: In 2020, a Member raised the issue of welfare of Anganwadi workers. The Member urged the government to increase workers' remuneration, and equip every Anganwadi Centre with basic facilities to improve their working conditions.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Resolution (Rule 170)	Two days before the date of ballot	-	Members who secure the first three places in balloting are allowed to give notice for one resolution each within two days of balloting.	Ballot

Balloting and allocation of time

Allocation of time for Private Members' Business is made on the recommendations of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions. The Committee consists of 15 Members nominated by Speaker. The Deputy Speaker is always included as a member and appointed as the Chairperson.

Statutory Resolution

Members and Ministers can move resolutions in pursuance of certain provisions in the Constitution, or an Act of Parliament. For instance, the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 allows the Central Government to increase the import duty levied on articles through an official notification, which is then approved by Parliament. In July 2023, a statutory resolution was adopted by Parliament which approved increased import duties on LPG.

Statutory resolutions can also be used to oppose Ordinances promulgated by the President. If adopted, the Ordinance will lapse.

Illustration: In 2023, an MP moved a statutory resolution under Article 123 of the Constitution to urge the House to disapprove the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023. The resolution was discussed with the Bill to replace the Ordinance, voted on, and negatived.

There are some interventions through which longer debates and discussions are held in the House. Participation in these debates is decided by party leadership. We discuss these below.

Short Duration Discussion under Rule 193

Under this provision, an MP can raise a discussion on a matter of urgent public importance. The topic and the duration is decided by the BAC. The MP raises the matter, which is followed by other MPs discussing the issue. The Minister-in-charge responds at the end of the discussion. Unlike some motions and resolutions, there is no formal voting that happens for this intervention.

Illustration: In 2022, a Short Duration Discussion was raised on the matter of price rise. Members highlighted issues like increasing wealth inequality, and sharp rise in cost of household items. They urged the government and the RBI to employ measures to control prices.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Short Duration Discussion (Rule 193)	Notices are accepted from the date of issue of summons	Two per session	Notice should accompany reasons for raising it. Notice should be supported by at least two other MPs. Two days can be allotted a week.	Speaker admits notice; BAC allocates time

Motion under Rule 184

The process for raising issues under this Rule is similar to that under Rule 193. However, there is one difference – under this Rule, issues are raised in the form of a motion. After the Minister’s reply, the House votes on the motion.

Illustration: In 2012, a motion recommending the government to immediately withdraw its decision to allow 51% Foreign Direct Investment in multi-brand retail trade was discussed. During the discussion, Members highlighted the impact of the government’s policy on small shop owners, farmers, and labourers.

No-Day-Yet-Named Motions

If the Speaker admits a motion under rule 184, but a date is not assigned for discussion, it is notified in Bulletin II as a ‘No-Day-Yet-Named Motion’.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Motions (Rule 184)	Notices are accepted from the date of issue of summons for a session	Two per session	-	Speaker admits notice; BAC allocates time

Adjournment Motions

This device may be used to draw attention to, and criticise the government’s decision on a matter of urgent public importance for which a motion or resolution, with notice, would be too late. If the motion is accepted by the Speaker, the House suspends the scheduled business for the day and adjourns after voting on the motion. The adoption of an adjournment motion is seen as a censure of the government, although there is no compulsion on the government to resign. No adjournment motion was admitted during the term of the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024).

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Adjournment Motion (Rule 57)	Before 10 am	Member can file one notice per sitting	-	Speaker’s discretion

No Confidence Motion

The government is collectively responsible to Lok Sabha for its policies and actions. If an MP thinks that the government's actions have not been satisfactory and it should resign, he can move a no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers. This motion acts as a trust vote for the government to demonstrate that it has the support of the House.

The motion under this rule is admitted only if at least 50 MPs support it on the floor of the House when called upon by Speaker. At the end of a debate, the motion is put to vote. If the motion is adopted, the government must resign.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements
No Confidence Motion (Rule 198)	Before 10 am	-	Needs support of 50 other MPs

Motion of Thanks to the President's Address

The Constitution provides for an address by the President to both Houses when Parliament convenes after a general election, and at the start of the first session every year. This address is drafted by the government, and contains the broad policy plans and legislative agenda for the year. After the address, each House discusses the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, and the Prime Minister responds at the end.

While participation in this debate is decided by the party, individual MPs can move amendments to the motion, which are put to vote. An amendment to the motion in Lok Sabha is treated as a vote of no-confidence against the government.

Illustration: Members have used the discussion under this motion to highlight a range of issues, including unemployment, inflation, performance of central schemes, and rising crimes against women.

Passing Bills

Discussing and Passing Laws

Parliament makes laws on various complex topics. Members have the opportunity to mould the contours of a law by participating in the law making process. They can participate in the process by speaking on Bills introduced in the House, moving amendments to such Bills, or by deliberating on Bills in Parliamentary Committees. Members can also introduce Private Members' Bills on topics that they believe require regulation or to change the existing legal framework. Participation in government Bill debates is decided by the party leadership. This section looks at the law-making process in Parliament.

Legislation

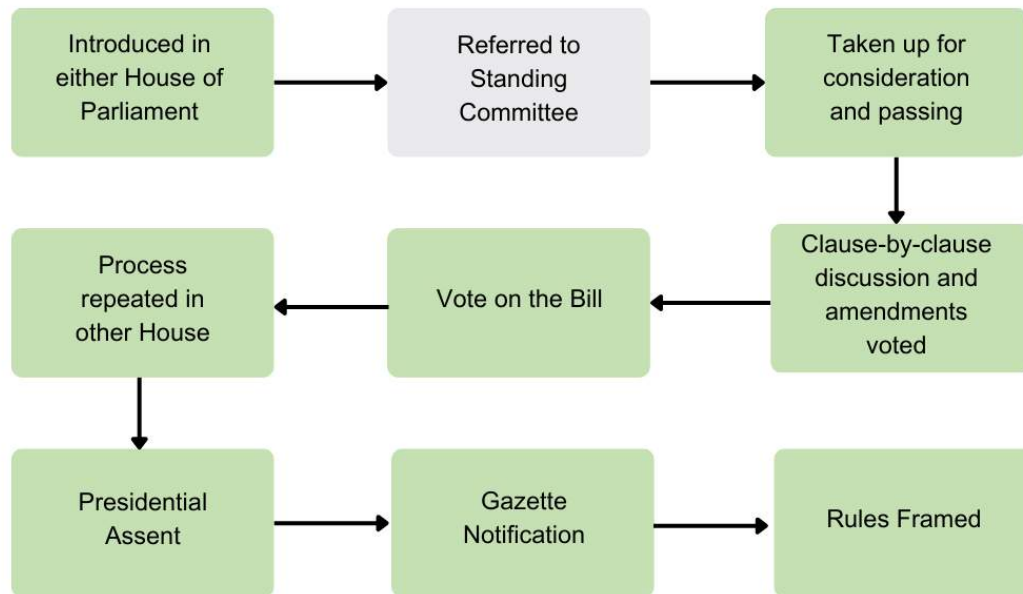
A Bill becomes an Act after it is passed by both Houses of Parliament, and receives the assent of the President. Government Bills are introduced by Ministers, and those introduced by individual MPs are known as Private Member Bills. Parliament can pass laws on subjects under the Union List (such as defence or railways) and the Concurrent List (such as criminal procedure, forests or social security) of the Constitution. Both Government and Private Member Bills have the same process for discussion and passing. However, Private Member Bills are rarely passed by Parliament (only 14 so far).

Table 1: Types of Bills in Parliament

Types of Bills	Subject	Introduction	Passing
Ordinary Bills	Any subject under the Union and Concurrent Lists	In either House	Simple majority in each House.
Constitution Amendment Bills	Amends the Constitution	In either House	Simple majority of total membership and two-third majority of MPs present and voting. Some Bills may need to be ratified by half the state legislatures in the country.
Money Bills	Involves taxation, borrowing, government funding, adding to or withdrawing funds from Consolidated or Contingency Funds of India.	Only in LS	Simple majority in LS. RS may recommend changes but LS can accept or reject them. RS must take a decision within 14 days else it is deemed as passed.

Law-Making Process

Figure 1: Steps to enact a law



Note: All Bills may not be referred to Committees.

Circulation of the Bill

Bills are circulated to MPs at least two days before introduction in the House. However, the Speaker may waive this requirement. For example, the 2023 Bill to provide for women's reservation in legislatures was circulated, introduced and discussed on the same day, and passed on the next day.

Introducing a Bill

The Minister moves a motion to introduce a Bill in the House. The introduction of the Bill in Parliament is called its 'First Reading'.

Intervention at introduction of a Bill: MPs can object to the introduction of a Bill on the grounds that the Bill is outside the legislative competence of Parliament or violates the Constitution. When the introduction is opposed, the Speaker may allow the opposing MP and the Minister-in-charge of the Bill to make brief statements. If opposition is on the grounds that the Bill deals with subjects outside the purview of Parliament, the Speaker may permit a full discussion on the Bill. Then,

the motion to introduce the Bill is put to vote. If the motion is passed, the Bill is introduced.

Illustration: The motion to introduce the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was opposed on the grounds that it violated the Constitution by legislating on a matter under state subject. However, the motion for opposing the introduction was defeated and the Bill was introduced.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements
Opposing introduction of Bill (Rule 72)	Before 10 am	None	Notice should specify the grounds for opposing.

Referring Bills to Committee

After a Bill is introduced, it may be taken up for discussion or referred to a Parliamentary Committee for further scrutiny. Both these motions are primarily made by the Minister who introduced the Bill. However, if the motion to discuss the Bill is moved, then Members can move an amendment to this motion that the Bill be referred to a Committee.

The Bill is not discussed until the Committee submits its report to the House. Once the report of the Committee has been tabled in the House, the concerned Ministry can move suitable amendments based on the recommendations. In some cases, the Bill may be withdrawn, or replaced by an entirely new Bill.

Illustration: 16% of Bills introduced during the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024) were referred to Committees. The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was referred to a Joint Committee. The Committee highlighted that in the proposed Bill, preservation of habitats had been removed from the list of purposes of the Biodiversity Management Committee, and no plausible reason was given for this change. The Committee also suggested that the conservation of living things in water bodies be added to this list. These recommendations were accepted and included in the Bill passed by Parliament.

Illustration: The three Bills to reform criminal laws were referred to the Standing Committee on Home Affairs. They were withdrawn after the Committee’s reports were presented in the House. Three new Bills were then introduced and passed, incorporating the Committee’s recommendations.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements
Amendment to Motion for consideration of Bill (to send the Bill for Committee scrutiny) (Rule 75)	One day	-	Specific date by which the Committee can present its report required. Names of proposed Members of the Committee, along with their consent required.

Discussion on the Bill

Once the motion for consideration of the Bill is adopted, the general discussion on the Bill begins. The time allocated for this debate is given to different parties based on their strength in the House. The party leadership decides which MPs will speak within the allocated time. Members can use this discussion to talk about the general principles of the Bill or flag clauses that they agree or disagree with.

After the general discussion, the Bill is discussed clause-by-clause. At this stage, both MPs and the Minister-in-charge can move amendments to the Bill. These amendments have to be filed with a day’s notice, and are circulated before the discussion. Members who have moved amendments may explain their reasons for proposing an amendment. These are then voted upon. An amendment can become part of the Bill if it is accepted by a majority of MPs. This stage is called the ‘Second Reading’.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements
Amendments to Bill (Rule 79)	One day	-	Speaker may ask for reasons for the amendment

Some pointers for preparing for a Bill discussion

- Does the subject of the Bill fall under the Union List or Concurrent List of the Constitution?
- What are the policy objectives behind the Bill?
- Given the stated policy objectives of the Bill, are there any alternatives that can be taken?
- Does the Bill violate Constitutional principles?
- How does the Bill affect different sections of society?
- Will the provisions of the Bill increase costs to the exchequer?
- Does the Bill increase scope for litigation?
- Is the Bill creating regulatory bodies or other authorities? Are these bodies representative of all interests? Do these bodies have the independence to perform their roles without bias?
- Does the Bill have an impact on states, or Centre-state relation?
- If the Bill indicates punishment for an offence, is it reasonable and proportionate?
- How much detail about the implementation of the Bill has been left to Rules and Regulations?

Voting on the Bill

After the discussion, the Minister moves the motion for passing of the Bill. This is the 'Third Reading' of the Bill. A simple majority of Members present and voting is needed for an Ordinary or Money Bill to become a law.

Procedure in the second House

Once a Bill is passed by the first House, it is sent to the other House for consideration and passing, where it follows the same process as above.

Presidential Assent

Once a Bill has been passed by both Houses of Parliament, it is presented to the President for assent. Once the President gives assent, the Bill becomes an Act.

Exceptions to the process

- **The second House amends the Bill:** If a Bill passed by Lok Sabha is amended by Rajya Sabha, it must be passed by Lok Sabha again before it goes to the President for his Assent.
- **The two Houses cannot agree on the Bill:** If a Bill has been passed by one House and rejected by the other, or if the two Houses have disagreed on amendments to the Bill, the President may call both Houses to vote in a joint sitting. This has occurred thrice in the past.
- **President returns the Bill:** Except for Money Bills and Constitution Amendment Bills, the President may return any Bill to Parliament for reconsideration. If Parliament passes the Bill, in the same or amended form, and sends it to the President again, he has to give assent.
- **Money Bills:** These can only be introduced in Lok Sabha. Rajya Sabha can only recommend changes to such Bills, and is required to pass such Bills within 14 days. If not, the Bill is deemed to be passed. Rejection of a Money Bill by Lok Sabha amounts to an indication of no confidence in the government.
- **Constitution Amendment Bills:** A simple majority of the total membership of the House, and two-thirds majority of MPs present and voting is required to pass such Bills. Some Bills may need to be ratified by half the country's state legislatures.

Ordinances

The Constitution allows the President to promulgate an Ordinance when Parliament is not in session, and immediate action is required.

Ordinances have the effect of law. However, they must be approved by Parliament within six weeks of the commencement of the next session of Parliament, otherwise they lapse. During the term of the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024), 29 Ordinances were issued on various subjects, including public health, marketing of agricultural goods, and tribunal reforms.

Opposing Ordinances: To make the provisions of an Ordinance permanent in law, a Bill may be introduced to replace it. A member can table a Statutory Resolution (discussed on page 12) under Article 123 of the Constitution, disapproving the promulgation of the Ordinance. If both Houses pass such resolutions, then the Ordinance lapses.

Subordinate Legislation

Bills provide a larger legal framework for policy and do not elaborate on the details required for its implementation. These details are delegated to the executive in the form of subordinate legislation. These include Rules, Regulations, Orders, Schemes, and Bye-laws, which are framed and notified by the government and tabled in the House.

Examining subordinate legislation

After the Rules have been tabled in the House, MPs can move a motion seeking their annulment or modification. If the motion is adopted in one House, it is transmitted to the other House for approval. If both Houses amend or repeal the Rules, they will be modified accordingly.

The Committee on Subordinate Legislation also examines and reports on Rules, Regulations, Orders, and other pieces of subordinate legislation.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements
Amendments/ Modifications to Rules (Rule 235)	Mentioned in the parent Act. Usually within 30 days sitting days after order/rule is tabled.	-	-

Private Members' Bills

Private Members' Bills (PMBs) are Bills introduced in Parliament by MPs who are not Ministers. In Lok Sabha, the last two and a half hours of sitting on alternate Fridays are allotted for discussing and passing PMBs.

PMBs are used by MPs to highlight gaps in the regulatory framework, draw attention to matters of national concern, and to represent public opinion in the House. The process for the passing of a PMB is similar to that of a government Bill.

Illustration: Between 2019 and 2024, more than 700 PMBs were introduced, dealing with matters related to home affairs, health, and education. Several of these PMBs also sought to amend the Constitution. The last time a PMB was passed by both Houses of Parliament was in 1970. One PMB was passed by Rajya Sabha in 2015.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements	Selection Process
Private Member Bills (Rule 65)	One month	Up to four Bills during a session	Notice should accompany copy of the Bill and explanatory note on statement of objects and reasons	Ballot

Financial Oversight

Scrutinising spending of public funds

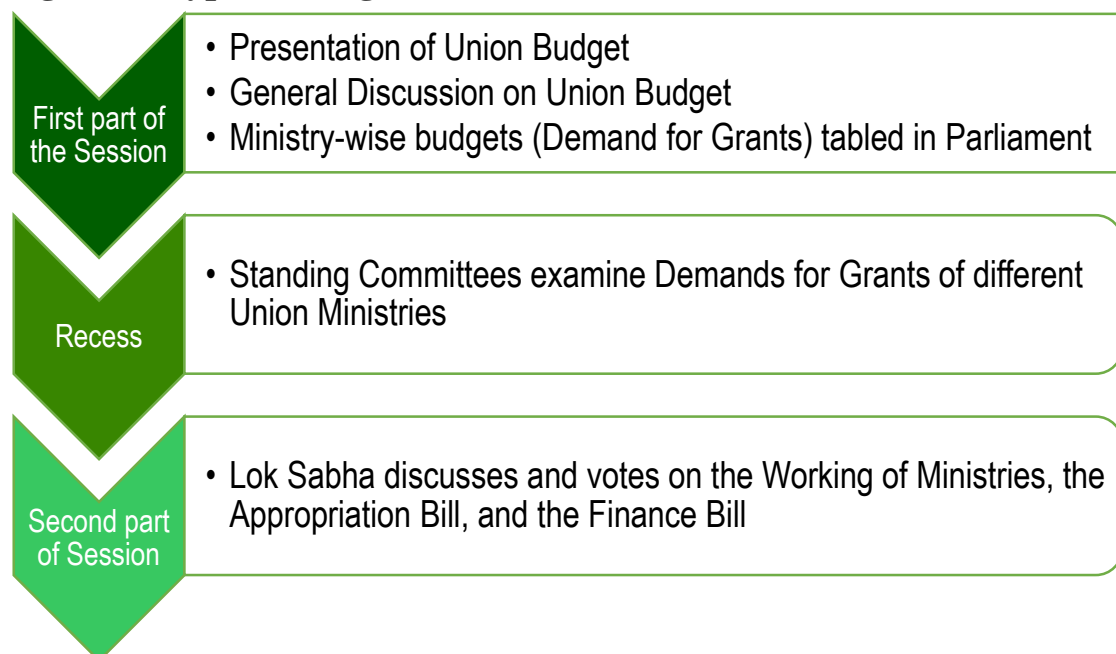
Spending of public funds require sanction by Parliament. This process begins with the presentation of the Union Budget every year which provides a financial statement of receipts and expenditure. Members discuss the allocation of money to ministries and their usage of funds. Participation in the budget discussion in the House is decided by the party leadership, while MPs can examine budgets of certain ministries in greater detail in the Committees they are a part of.

This section provides an overview of the budget process, budget documents, and the various ways in which MPs can participate in the discussion on the budget. For a detailed discussion on the budget process, please see the PRS primer on “[Overseeing Public Funds](#)”.

Union Budget

The Union Budget is presented to Parliament by the Finance Minister each year in February. The timing may vary during an election year. While presenting the budget, the Minister broadly outlines the details of the proposals for the upcoming financial year in relation to taxation, borrowing, and expenditure.

Figure 3: Typical Budget Session Timeline



Budget Process

General Discussion: After the budget is tabled, a general discussion on the broad outline of the budget takes place. After the conclusion of the general discussion, Parliament breaks into recess for about three weeks. During this time, the Departmentally Related Standing Committees (more details on page 32) examine the proposed expenditure of ministries, which are called Demands for Grants (DFGs). These Committees submit reports on each DFG once Parliament reconvenes.

Illustration: Members have used this discussion to talk about the performance of the Indian economy from a global perspective. Members have also highlighted lack of allocation of funds to schemes like PM-KISAN, MGNREGA or requested a raise in spending on asset creation across states.

Key Budget Documents

Some important documents that are tabled at the time of presentation of the Union Budget include the following:

- **The Annual Financial Statement:** This provides an account of expenditure and receipts of the government for current year, previous year, and next financial year.
- **Budget at a Glance:** Brief overview of the budget to capture key proposals and numbers.
- **Expenditure Budget:** Details the expenditure of various ministries and departments including the Demands for Grants for each ministry.
- **Receipts Budget:** Details the income from tax and non-tax sources for the government.
- **Finance Bill:** Details any changes to the country's existing tax laws.
- **Memorandum explaining the Provisions in the Finance Bill:** Explains the implications of the various changes in tax laws proposed in the Finance Bill.
- **Medium Term Fiscal Strategy Document:** This document highlights government's plans for reducing debt and deficits, and sets three-year rolling targets for some fiscal indicators.

Discussion on DFGs: Post recess, the DFGs of selected ministries are discussed in the House, after which they are voted upon. Other remaining DFGs are ‘guillotined,’ i.e. they are voted upon together without discussion. In 2023, all DFGs were guillotined in this way. The DFGs to be discussed in the House are selected on the recommendation of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, which holds a meeting with leaders of all parties to arrive at the list of Ministries. The allocated time is split between parties based on their strength by Speaker.

Authorising expenditure: The DFGs are consolidated into an Appropriation Bill to sanction the proposed expenditure. This Bill allows government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for the sanctioned expenditure.

Authorising tax changes: The Finance Bill includes all the proposed amendments to the various tax laws. It is introduced immediately after the Budget is presented, and is taken up for consideration and passing after the discussion on DFGs.

Lok Sabha must discuss and pass both the Appropriation and Finance Bills to allow implementation of budget proposals. The Rajya Sabha only has a recommendatory role in passing these Bills, as they are Money Bills.

Illustration: During a discussion on the DFG of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Members flagged a range of issues from allocation of funds, to the impact on MSMEs during Covid-19 lockdown. MPs also highlighted the performance of schemes like the Start-up India Initiative. Some MPs also requested the ministry to launch schemes in their states to boost development.

Supplementary Demand for Grants

During the year, if the government needs to spend additional money which has not been approved by Parliament, it can seek approval of such expenditure by introducing Supplementary Demands for Grants. These are consolidated into an Appropriation Bill, discussed, and passed.

Vote on Account

During an election year, or whenever it is anticipated that the complete Budget may take longer to be passed by the House, a Vote on Account is approved for a suitable proportion of the estimated expenditure. This keeps the expenditure of ministries operational until the full budget is passed. In February 2024, a vote on account was passed, and the full Budget will be presented in July-August 2024 after the constitution of the new Lok Sabha.

Cut Motions

During the discussion on DFGs, MPs can move Cut Motions. These motions are a way to initiate a discussion on the DFGs, and express a disapproval of the expenditure or the policy underlying the expenditure. If a cut motion is passed, the government is expected to resign. Cut Motions are of three types:

- **Disapproval of a Policy Cut:** Aims to reduce the demand from a Ministry to Re 1. This indicates a disapproval of the policy underlying the specific demand.
- **Economy Cut:** Aims to reduce the demand from a Ministry by a specific amount.
- **Token Cut:** Aims to reduce the demand from a Ministry by Rs 100 to express a specific grievance.

Intervention	Notice Period	Limits per MP	Requirements
Cut Motions (Rule 209)	One Day	-	Each notice should relate to one demand only

**PARTICIPATING IN
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**

Parliamentary Committees

Parliament's work is complex and varied, covering a wide range of issues that are often specialised and nuanced in nature. Due to the limited time available during a session, Members cannot scrutinise all issues in detail on the floor of the House. A significant portion of Parliament's work is carried out in Parliamentary Committees.

Committees examine proposed Bills, explore specific topics, oversee government actions, and review government spending. They provide advice and scrutiny, and ensure the accountability of the executive to the legislature. The reports submitted by Committees to the House allow for informed debate. They also provide a forum to build consensus across party lines, and enable consultations with experts and stakeholders.

Types of Committees

Parliamentary Committees may be of two types: (i) Standing Committees, which are permanent in nature, or (ii) Ad hoc Committees, which are constituted for a specific purpose.

Standing Committees scrutinise Bills, examine matters of public importance, and oversee public expenditure. Some Committees have Members from both Houses. Most Standing Committees hold office for period of one year after which the Speaker constitutes a new Committee.

Ad hoc Committees may be constituted to examine a Bill or discuss a matter of national importance. These could be Select Committees (with Members from one House) or Joint Committees (with Members from both Houses).

Types of Ad Hoc Committees: Joint Parliamentary Committees have been appointed to scrutinise Bills such as the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022. Joint Committees have also been constituted to examine issues like the 1992 stock market scam, and the allocation and pricing of telecom licenses and spectrum.

Departmentally Related Standing Committees

There are 24 Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs). They examine: (i) Bills referred to them, (ii) Ministry-wise budgets, and (iii) sector-specific subjects selected by them. Members may suggest subjects for examination to the Committee Chair. DRSCs comprise of 31 Members from both Houses. 16 DRSCs have Chairpersons from Lok Sabha, and eight from Rajya Sabha.

Examining Bills: Committees examine Bills referred to them, and submit their reports in the House. Based on the Committee's recommendations on a Bill, the government, or any other MP may move amendments to the Bill. Members may also use recommendations of the DRSCs for a more informed debate on the Bill in the House.

Illustration: The Consumer Protection Bill, 2015 was referred to the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs, and Public Distribution. As per the Bill, a consumer had to prove that a defective product satisfied six specified conditions for the manufacturer to be held liable. The Committee noted that a consumer would not be able to claim liability if any one condition is not met. This Bill was later withdrawn. The Committee's recommendation was incorporated in the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Examining Demand for Grants: DRSCs examine the Demand for Grants of all Ministries under their purview. They examine the funds allocated to various schemes and programmes under each Ministry, and look at trends in the utilisation of these funds. The recommendations of Committees help MPs understand the implications of the allocation, and allow for a more informed debate.

Examining issues: Committees also take up issues of public importance for detailed examination by themselves. They can choose subjects on sector-specific issues, or the implementation of policies or schemes of the concerned Ministry, in consultation with external experts.

Illustration: The Committee on Finance has presented reports on subjects like the rising incidence of cyber/white collar crimes, anti-competitive practices by big tech companies, and financing the startup ecosystem.

Financial Committees

Financial Committees facilitate Parliament's scrutiny over government expenditure. There are three financial Committees:

Public Accounts Committee: Examines CAG audit reports to assess whether public funds are being utilised properly.

Committee on Public Undertakings: Examines CAG reports on public sector undertakings.

Estimates Committee: Assists with Parliament's scrutiny over government's expenditure and over general policies of administration.

Illustration: In March 2023, the Estimates Committee tabled a report examining the Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy. It noted that the Minister on Road Transport and Highways had advised states to waive road tax on EVs, which would help reduce the initial cost of EVs. Some states had waived or reduced road tax on EVs. The Committee also noted that this led to a loss of revenue for states, and recommended that the Central government award some compensation to states.

Other Standing Committees

Committee of Privileges: Examines all questions involving breach of certain rights, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by MPs.

Committee on Ethics: Examines cases with reference to the moral and ethical conduct of MPs.

Committee on Subordinate Legislation: Scrutinises rules, regulations, orders, bye-laws, etc., which are laid on the table of the House.

Committee on Government Assurance: During a reply to a question or a discussion, the Minister may assure the House that further action will be taken by the government, and will be reported back. Such an assurance may include taking a matter into consideration, taking action, or providing further information to the House. The Committee on Government Assurances monitors and reports on the implementation of assurances made by Ministers.

Committee on Petitions: Examines petitions referred to it and suggests measures to address the complaint made in the petition.

Committees related to day-to-day functioning of the House

Business Advisory Committee: Allocates time for various government and other business in the House. The Speaker is the ex-officio chairman of the Committee, and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is always nominated to the Committee. Leaders or representatives of parties with five or more MPs, which are not represented on the Committee, may be invited as special invitees.

Rules Committee: Examines the conduct of business in Lok Sabha, and recommends amendments or additions to the rules of procedure.

Committee on Private Members Bills' and Resolutions: Examines and allocates time for Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

Apart from the Committees named above, there are other Committees which look at providing facilities to MPs, such as the House Committee, and the Library Committee.

Working in Committees

Appointment to Committees: For some Committees, Members are elected by the House, and for some, they are nominated by the Speaker (see Table 2 on page 36). The Speaker nominates Members to Committees in a manner that all parties are represented proportional to their strength in the House. The Chairperson is appointed by the Speaker from amongst the Committee Members.

Committee meetings: Committees meet regardless of whether or not the House is in session. These meetings are confidential and are conducted in a closed-door environment.

Stakeholder consultation: During Committee meetings, Members can invite Ministry officials, stakeholders, and subject experts for depositions. They can also invite comments from the public. The Committee may also undertake study tours, with prior permission of the Speaker. Members may recommend experts that the Committee can consult.

Illustration: The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was discussed by a Joint Committee over 15 meetings. Public opinion on the Bill was sought, and more than 206 memoranda were received from the public. 47 stakeholders, including representatives of state governments, the National and State Biodiversity Boards, industry associations, and civil society organisations gave evidence to the Committee.

Committee Reports: The Draft Report is circulated amongst Members of the Committee, and then adopted. Members may record a note of dissent if they disagree with the report findings. The report is then tabled in the House.

After a Committee submits its report on a subject to Parliament, the Ministry responds to its recommendations. On reports related to budgets and specific subjects, measures taken by the government to implement the Committee's recommendations are reviewed, and the Committee submits an Action Taken Report to the House.

Table 2: Types of Parliamentary Committees

Committee	Duties	Number of MPs	Nomination/ Election
Departmentally Related Standing Committees	Examine Bills, policies and issues, and their specific ministry's budget	21 LS, 10 RS	By Speaker and Chairman
Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs)	Temporary investigative Committees set up for a specific object and duration to examine issues of public importance or Bills	Decided by Speaker and Chairman	By Speaker and Chairman
Public Accounts Committee (PAC)	Analyses government expenditure and examines CAG audit reports	15 LS, 7 RS	Elected by LS and RS
Estimates Committee	Oversees pre-budget estimates and examines the limits of proposed expenditure	30 LS	Elected by LS
Public Undertakings	Analyses the accounts and CAG reports of public sector undertakings (PSUs)	15 LS, 7 RS	Elected by LS and RS
Petitions	Hears petitions related to Bills, business pending in the House, or any matter of public interest	15 LS	Nominated by Speaker
Government Assurances	Examines assurances made by ministers on the floor of the Parliament, and submits reports on the status of implementation	15 LS	Nominated by Speaker
Subordinate Legislation	Scrutinises rules and regulations made by the executive under delegated legislation	15 LS	Nominated by Speaker
Business Advisory Committee	Allocates time for various business taken up by the House	15 LS (Speaker is Chairperson)	Nominated by Speaker
Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions	Examines all Private Members' Bills and allocates time for Private Members' Business	15 LS	Nominated by Speaker
Rules	Examines the Rules of Procedure of the House and recommends any amendments or additions	15 LS (Speaker is Chairperson)	Nominated by Speaker
Privileges	Hears questions relating to the breach of rights, privileges, or immunities by MPs	15 LS	Nominated by Speaker

Committee	Duties	Number of MPs	Nomination/ Election
Ethics	Oversees moral and ethical conduct of Members, examines cases relating to the same	15 LS	Nominated by Speaker
House Committee	Deals with amenities like accommodation and medical aid for Members	12 LS	Nominated by Speaker
General Purposes	Advises on matters concerning the House - procedural, functional, ceremonial issues	Not fixed	Generally consists of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Panel of Chairpersons, and Leaders of major political parties

Table 3: Interventions in Lok Sabha

Rule No.	Intervention	Purpose	Notice period	Requirements/Limits
33	Questions	To ask questions from ministries	15 days	Maximum 230 Unstarred and 20 Starred per day (Five per MP, of which one may be starred)
54	Short Notice Questions	To ask questions at shorter notice	Less than 10 days	Notice should be accompanied with a reason for short notice
55	Half-an-Hour Discussion	Further questions or response to a Starred or Unstarred Question	Three days	Notice should be accompanied by the reason for raising this discussion. Allowed for three days per week
377	Matters which are not point of order	Raising matters of urgent importance that cannot be raised under other rules	Notices received from start of the week to 10 am of last day of week remain valid for that week	One notice per member can be admitted during a week
197	Calling attention	Calling attention of a minister to matter of urgent importance	Before 10 am on day of sitting	A Member can file two notices per sitting and a total of two matters can be raised in a day
170	Resolutions	To convey the opinion of the House on any matter of public interest	Two days before the date of ballot	Members who secure top three places in ballot can give notice for one resolution
193	Short Duration Discussion	Raising discussion on a matter of urgent public importance	Notices are accepted from the date of issue of session summons	A Member can raise two per session and notice requires support of two other MPs. Two days a week can be allotted for discussion
184	Motions	Discussing and voting on a matter of urgent public importance	Notices are accepted from the date of issue of session summons	-
57	Adjournment Motion	Suspend business for the day to discuss urgent matter	Before 10 am	A Member can file one notice per sitting
198	No Confidence Motion	Expressing dissatisfaction and seeking resignation of government	Before 10 am	Needs support of 50 other MPs

Rule No.	Intervention	Purpose	Notice period	Requirements/Limits
72	Opposing introduction of Bill	Opposing motion to introduce a Bill on specific grounds	Before 10 am	Notice should specify the grounds for opposing.
75	Amendment to Motion for consideration of Bill	Sending a Bill to a Committee for detailed scrutiny	One day	Specific date by which the Committee can present its report required. Names of proposed Members of the Committee, along with their consent required.
79	Amendments to Bill	To propose changes to specific sections of a Bill	One day	Speaker may ask for reasons for the amendment
235	Amendments/ Modifications to Rules	To amend or repeal a Rule or Regulation tabled by the government	As specified in the parent Act	-
65	Private Member Bills	Bills introduced by MPs who are not Ministers	One month	Notice should accompany copy of the Bill and explanatory note on statement of objects and reasons. Members can introduce up to four Bills during a session
209	Cut Motions	To oppose or seek reduction in a specific Demand for Grants	One day	Each notice should relate to one demand only

Sources:

- Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 16th Edition, 2019
- Directions by the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 9th Edition, 2019
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- Practice and Procedures of Parliament, Lok Sabha Secretariat, M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shaktiher, 7th Edition, 2016

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