

Vital Stats

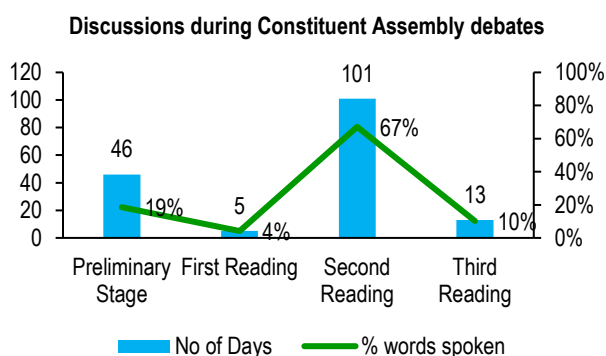
Analysis of the Constituent Assembly Debates

The Constitution of India was enacted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. This enactment completes 70 years on November 26, 2019. The Indian Constitution was a product of deliberations of the Assembly for over three years. In this document, we analyse the participation of members in the Assembly during these debates. Note that these numbers do not measure the quality of contribution of members including during meetings of various sub-committees. We have used number of words as a measure to indicate the relative contribution and time spent on discussing different issues.

Constituent Assembly debates can be broadly divided into four parts.

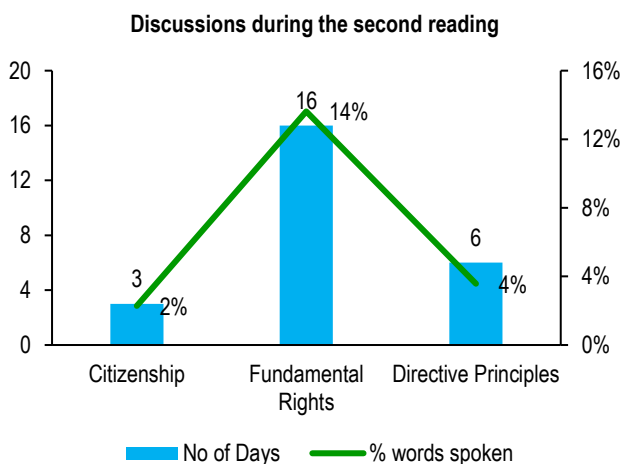
Debate stages	Debate dates	Description of work
Preliminary Stage	Dec 9, 1946 – Jan 27, 1948	Committees, such as Union Powers Committee, Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minorities, submitted reports to outline the guiding principles of the Constitution. The drafting committee was constituted to prepare the draft Constitution.
First Reading	Nov 4, 1948 – Nov 9, 1948	Drafting committee published the draft Constitution of India in February 1948. The draft was introduced in the Assembly in November 1948.
Second Reading	Nov 15, 1948 – Oct 17, 1949	Clause by clause discussion of the draft was conducted in the Assembly.
Third Reading	Nov 14, 1949 – Nov 26, 1949	The Assembly finished the third reading and enacted the Constitution on November 26, 1949.

The Assembly discussed the text of the Constitution for 101 days



- The Assembly met for a total number of 165 days between 1946 and 1950.
- 46 days were spent on preliminary discussion in the Assembly and 101 days were spent on the clause by clause discussion of the draft Constitution.
- Approximately 36 lakh words were spoken during Assembly debates. Two-thirds of all deliberations were during the clause by clause discussion in the second reading.

14% of the clause by clause discussion was on Fundamental Rights



- From November 1948 to October 1949, the Assembly met for clause by clause discussion on the draft Constitution. They met for 101 days during this period.
- Fundamental Rights were included in Part III of the draft Constitution. These were discussed for 16 days. 14% of the total clause by clause discussion was dedicated to Fundamental Rights.
- Directive Principles of State Policy were included in Part IV. These were discussed for six days. 4% of the clause by clause discussion was dedicated to Directive Principles.
- Provisions related to Citizenship were included in Part II. It was discussed for three days. 2% of the discussion was dedicated to this part.

Six members spoke more than one lakh words

Drafting Committee Members	Words Spoken
B. R. Ambedkar	2,67,544
T. T. Krishnamachari (from January, 1948)	97,638
Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar	61,162
K. M. Munshi	60,056
N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar	56,025
Mohammad Saadulla	19,868
Debi Prasad Khaitan (Died in 1948)	4,927
N. Madhava Rao	3,046
B. L. Mitter	2,811

Assembly Members	Word Spoken
H. V. Kamath	1,88,749
Naziruddin Ahmad	1,46,645
K. T. Shah	1,21,825
Shibban Lal Saksena	1,14,264
Thakur Das Bhargava	1,03,775
R. K. Sidhwa	88,595
Jawaharlal Nehru	73,804
P. S. Deshmukh	69,557
Hirday Nath Kunzru	69,158
M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar	55,357

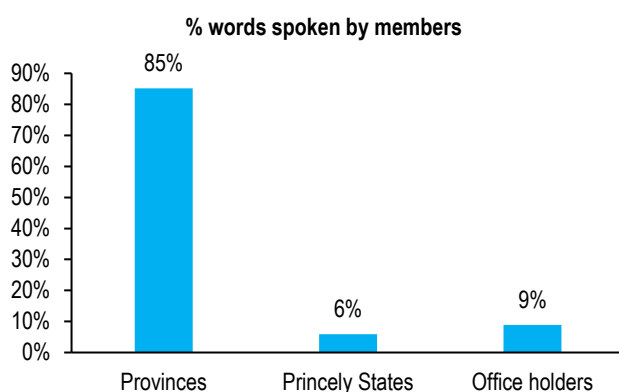
- The drafting Committee scrutinised and revised the draft created by the Constitutional Advisor, Sir B. N. Rau and submitted it for the consideration of the Assembly. The Committee members frequently responded to comments made by other members during the discussion. This led to a higher participation by these members in the Assembly.
- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the drafting Committee, spoke the most in the Assembly.
- A few members who were not part of the drafting Committee participated extensively in Assembly debates. Five such members said more than one lakh words each.

Women members altogether contributed to 2% of the discussion

Women Member	Words Spoken
G. Durgabai	22,905
Begum Aizaz Rasul	10,480
Renuka Ray	10,312
Purnima Banerji	9,013
Dakshayani Velayudhan	4,415
Annie Mascarene	2,970
Sarojini Naidu	2,342
Hansa Mehta	1,837
Vijayalakshmi Pandit	1,164
Ammu Swaminathan	1,056

- During the entire tenure of the Assembly, 15 women were a part of the Assembly, of which 10 participated in debates. They contributed to 2% of discussions in the Assembly.
- The highest participation was made by G. Durgabai with nearly 23,000 words. She spoke extensively on the judiciary during the debates.
- Ammu Swaminathan, Begum Aizaz Rasul, and Dakshyani Velayudhan participated in debates on Fundamental Rights.
- Hansa Mehta and Renuka Ray participated in debates on justice for women in India.

Members from provinces contributed 85% to Assembly debates



- In the Constituent Assembly 210 members elected from provinces, and 64 members nominated by the princely states participated in debates.
- Members elected from provinces contributed to 85% of discussions in the Assembly, while the representatives from princely states contributed to 6% of the discussions.
- On average, each member from provinces spoke 14,817 words and a member from princely states spoke 3,367 words.
- Speeches and interventions made by the presiding officers contributed to 9% of the discussions.

Sources: Constituent Assembly Debates, Centre for Law and Policy Research (https://www.constitutionofindia.net/constitution_assembly_debates). Text for Constituent Assembly Debate on January 20, 1947 has been taken from Lok Sabha website (<http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Debates/cadebatefiles/C20011947.html>). Selected Speeches of Women Members of the Constituent Assembly, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, April 2012. The Indian Constitution Cornerstone of a Nation, Granville Austin.

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