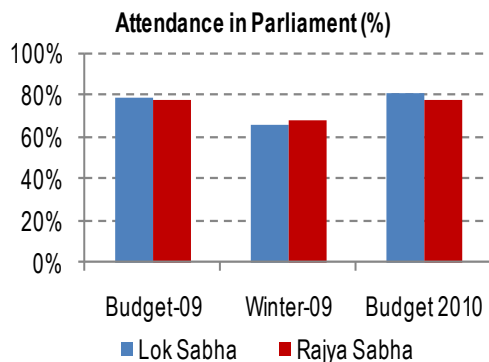


Vital Stats

Parliament – Budget Session 2010

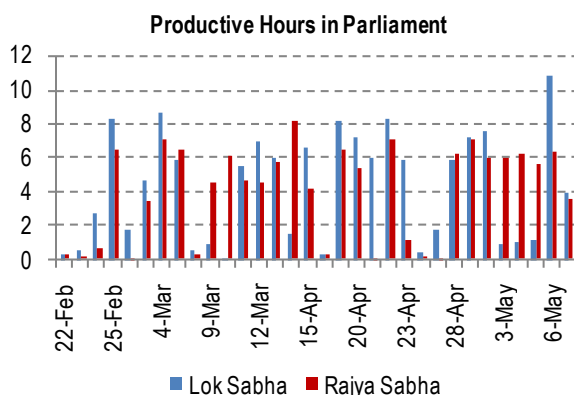
Parliament met for the Budget Session between 22nd February and 7th May with a one month recess beginning in mid-March. Apart from budget discussions, the session saw debates on several major issues such as price rise, phone tapping and naxalism. The Rajya Sabha also debated and passed the Women’s Reservation Bill. We present some statistics from this recently concluded session.

Attendance in the Lok Sabha was 82% - much higher than in previous sessions



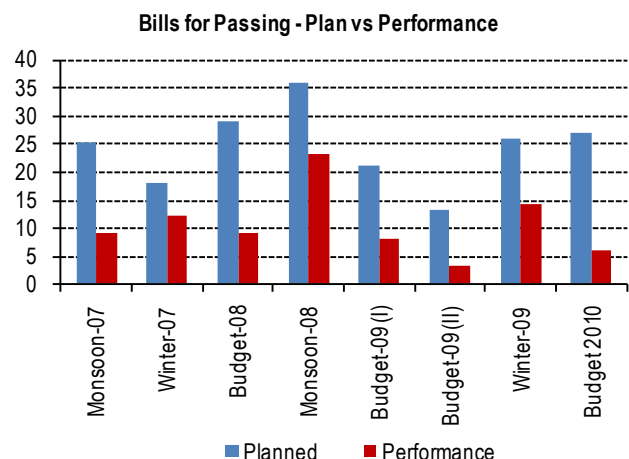
- Average attendance in the Rajya Sabha was 78%, compared with 68% in the Winter Session 2009.
- Attendance in the Lok Sabha was 66% during the Winter Session 2009 and 79% during the Budget Session 2009.
- Attendance was over 90% on the days that the Finance Bill was debated and put to vote.

However, far more time was lost to interruptions



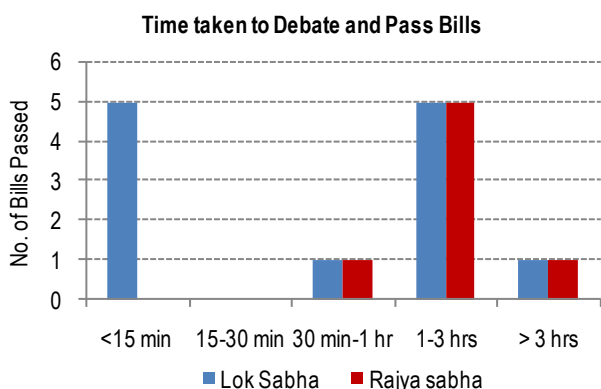
- On 8 of 32 days, Lok Sabha met for less than an hour. The Rajya Sabha met for less than an hour on 9 days.
- Several hours were lost to interruptions. Total productive time in Lok Sabha was 138 hours - 66% of scheduled time. Productive time in the winter session 2009, in contrast was 76% of scheduled time.
- Productive time in Rajya Sabha was 130 hours – 74% of scheduled time. Productive hours were 88% of scheduled time in the Winter Session 2009.
- Parliament was disrupted over issues such as price rise, Women’s Reservation Bill and the IPL controversy.

Only 6 bills, of the original target of 27, were passed by both Houses this session



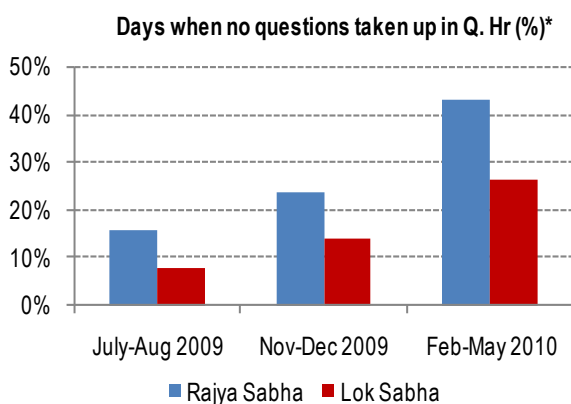
- Prior to the commencement of each session, the Government publishes a list of business. Among other things, this agenda contains the list of Bills that the Government seeks to pass.
- The Government had planned to pass 27 bills this session. Only six bills were passed by both houses of Parliament.
- Bills passed included the Tamil Nadu Legislative Councils Bill 2010, the Employees State Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2009, and the National Green Tribunal Bill, 2009.
- In the previous session, 14 bills were passed.

40% of bills were passed by the Lok Sabha without discussion



- The Lok Sabha passed 12 bills this session. Five of these bills were passed with less than 15 minutes of discussion each.
- The Lower House passed the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2010, and the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Bill, 2010, within the space of 5 minutes on 3rd May.
- The Women's Reservation Bill was debated for almost four hours before being passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9th March, amidst numerous disruptions.
- Parliament debated the National Green Tribunal Bill for over seven hours.

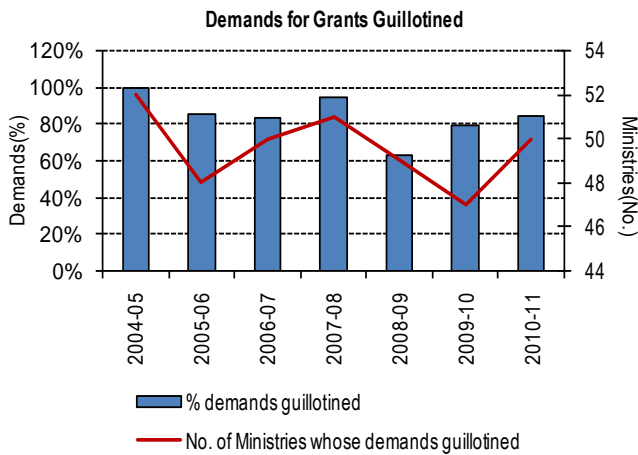
Not a single question could be answered orally on 43% of days in Rajya Sabha



*data shows % of days on which question hour was scheduled, but not a single starred question could be taken up for oral response.

- Starred questions – questions orally answered by Ministers during Question Hour – are usually followed with supplementary questions from other MPs.
- However, not all starred questions can receive a verbal response from the minister, due to lack of time, or because of interruptions.
- In the Rajya Sabha no question could be answered orally on 13 days out of 30. This happened in the Lok Sabha on 8 days.
- Of the total 620 starred questions admitted this session in the Rajya Sabha, only 92 were called in the House (14% of total). In contrast, 30% of starred questions received a verbal response in the House during the Winter Session.
- In the Lok Sabha, 12% of starred questions received a verbal response, compared with 18% in the Winter Session.

The budget demands of three ministries were discussed, and the rest guillotined



- During the Budget Session, Parliament approved funds asked for by various central ministries (demands for grants) for 2010-11.
- Parliament usually does not have the time to discuss the demands for grants of all ministries. The demands of just a few ministries are discussed at length, with the rest of the demands being ‘guillotined’ i.e. put to vote together, and without discussion.
- The demands for grants of 3 ministries, which together accounted for 16% of total funds to be voted by parliament for 2010-11, were discussed in detail. The balance amount i.e.84% were guillotined.
- For the 2009-10 budget, demands for grants amounting to 21% of expenditure (six ministries) were discussed at length.

Notes:

1. This list of Bills does not include Finance and Appropriation Bills
2. The entire analysis is based on detailed data obtained from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha websites.
3. Data on debates was compiled from the daily Bulletin I supplemented with the actual text of debates as published by the Lok Sabh and Rajya Sabha secretariats
4. In our analysis, we did not include proposals and responses by Ministers to various issues.
5. Our data on Demands For Grants covers only ‘voted’ expenditure i.e. funds which Parliament must approve. It excludes ‘charged’ expenditure, such as payment of interest on government bonds, which Parliament cannot vote on, but must compulsorily approve.

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