

Vital Stats

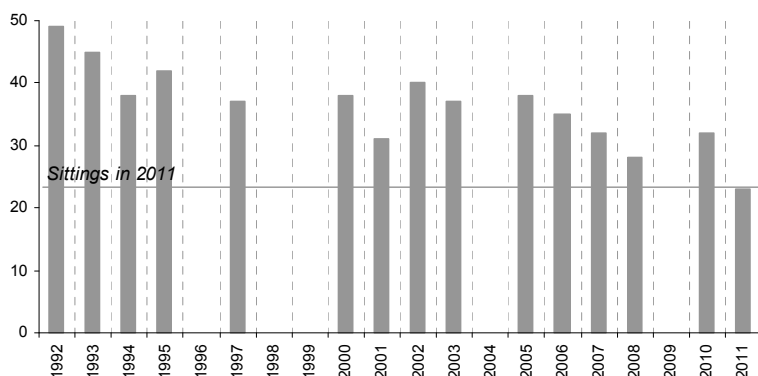
Parliament in Budget Session 2011

The Budget Session of Parliament began on a positive note, with the government and the opposition arriving at a consensus on key issues such as the formation of a JPC. However, by the second week, both Houses saw frequent disruptions.

The session was cut short due to the impending assembly elections in five states. As a result, the Parliamentary Standing Committees were not able to scrutinize the budget and it was passed without their consideration.

This session was the shortest Budget Session in the last two decades

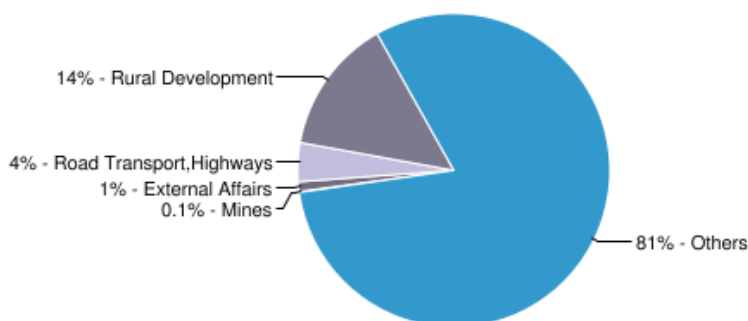
Duration of Budget Session in Lok Sabha
(no. of sittings)



Note: General Election years have been excluded from the above analysis

- Both Houses sat for a total of 23 days. This Budget Session recorded the lowest number of sittings in a non-election year in the last two decades.
- Lok Sabha spent 44 hours discussing the budget, and Rajya Sabha spent 23 hours.
- The Standing Committees this year were unable to scrutinize the budget. Usually, the budget session is divided into two parts with a brief recess in between. The Committees use this recess period to analyze the budget proposals in detail. * This year, the recess was done away with and the session was cut short due to the impending assembly elections in five states.

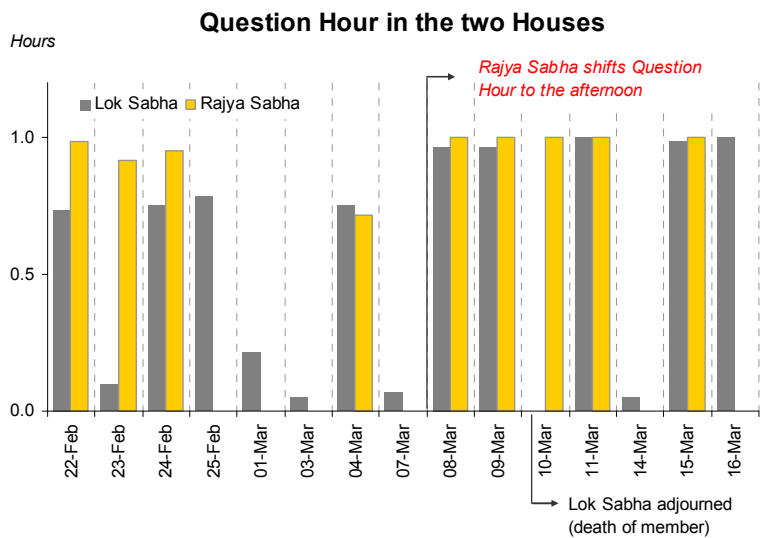
81% of the budget demands were not discussed



- Parliament usually does not have the time to discuss the Demands for Grants (budgetary allocations) of each ministry. Therefore, demands of only a few ministries are discussed at length, while the rest are ‘guillotined’ i.e. put to vote together, without any discussion.
- This year, demands of 4 ministries – Mines, External Affairs, Road Transport and Highways, and Rural Development – were taken up for discussion. The balance amount i.e. 81% was guillotined.
- In 2010, 84% of the demands were guillotined. The year before that i.e. in 2009, 79% of the demands had been guillotined.

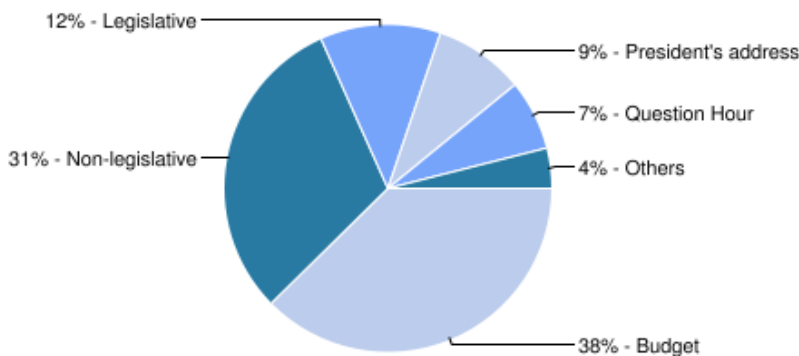
* Parliamentary Standing Committees were first instituted in April, 1993. After the Budget is presented, the budgetary proposals of each Ministry are considered by the concerned Standing Committee. The Committee then reports to the House within a specified period of time.

Question Hour was often disrupted; 40% of the time was lost to disruptions in Lok Sabha



- Usually, the first hour of a sitting in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha is scheduled to be the Question Hour. Data of last several years indicates that the Question Hour often gets disrupted.
- According to Chairman Hamid Ansari, members often tend to raise matters of concern at the expense of the Question Hour¹. In a bid to contain this problem, he recently announced a change in the order of business of Rajya Sabha. The Question Hour has now been moved to 2 pm in the afternoon.
- The adjacent graph shows the duration of Question Hour in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. After the shift was affected, the average duration of Question Hour in Rajya Sabha was 43 minutes. During the same period, the average in Lok Sabha was 50 min.

Over 30% of the productive time was spent on non-legislative debates



- This session saw a significant amount of time being spent on non-legislative debates. Over 30% of the total productive time in both Houses was spent on issues such as the constitution of JPC, revelations made by Wikileaks etc.
- In the Lok Sabha, 38% of the productive time was spent in discussing the budget; another 9% was spent on the President's Address. Only 12% of the time was spent on legislation.
- In comparison, the Rajya Sabha spent lesser time on legislation. Only 6% of the productive time was spent in Bill discussions.

Besides the budget, six other government Bills were taken up for discussion in Lok Sabha

Table: Time spent on Legislation (Hrs:Min)

Bill	LS	RS
The Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010	02:53	--
The SBI (Subsidiary Banks) Amendment Bill, 2010	02:34	00:44
The Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research Bill, 2010	01:41	--
The Repatriation of Prisoners (Amendment) Bill, 2010	01:26	00:31
The Coinage Bill, 2009	00:13	--
The NCT of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Bill, 2011	00:03	00:02
The Orissa (Alteration of Name) Bills (Two Bills discussed together)	--	01:16

- Besides finance and appropriation Bills, the government had listed 34 Bills for introduction. However, only 9 were introduced.
- 6 Bills were taken up for discussion in the Lok Sabha and 5 in the Rajya Sabha. The 'Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010' was the most discussed Bill. Discussions continued for approximately 3 hours and saw participation from 21 MPs.

Notes:

- 'Question Hour shifted to 2pm in Rajya Sabha', 04 March, Indian Express
- All data has been obtained from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha websites and/ or the Resume of Work.

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