

Revamp Parliament Functioning

Mains: GSII - Polity

Why in News?

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill and the Delimitation Bill, 2026, propose increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha from 550 to 850 members, highlighting the need to improve both electoral representation and Parliament's functioning.

Why is Parliamentary Reform Needed?

- **Growing electorate** - India had 97.98 crore registered voters in 2024 across 543 Lok Sabha constituencies.
- **Unequal constituency sizes** - Malkajgiri in Telangana had 37.8 lakh voters, compared with just 57,953 in Lakshadweep.
- **Limited parliamentary participation** - Increasing MPs without extending sitting hours may reduce the time available to each member to raise constituency concerns.
- **Weak legislative scrutiny** - Short debates and disruptions can undermine accountability and the quality of law-making.

Delimitation exercise background

- **1976 (42nd Amendment)** - Froze state-wise Lok Sabha and Assembly seat allocations based on the 1971 Census.
 - It is protecting states that achieved population control from losing representation.
- **2001 (84th Amendment)** - Extended the freeze on state-wise seat allocation until after the first Census published post-2026.
- **Current Status** - Constituency boundaries were redrawn using 2001 Census data in 2008.
 - The seat allocation among states remains frozen, raising concerns over future regional representation.

What are the Major Challenges in Parliament's Functioning?

- **Shortage of Parliamentary Time**
 - Question Hour - During the 17th Lok Sabha, Question Hour functioned for only 60% of its scheduled time.
 - The 2026 Monsoon Session reportedly saw just nine minutes of Question Hour.
 - **Zero Hour** - Limited time restricts MPs' ability to raise urgent public issues.
 - **Private Member's Bills** - Insufficient discussion time weakens opportunities for non-minister MPs to propose legislation.

- **Budget scrutiny** – During the 17th Lok Sabha, around 80% of the Union Budget was passed through the guillotine procedure,
 - Without detailed discussion on all demands for grants.
- **Inadequate Legislative Scrutiny**
 - Around 35% of Bills during the 17th Lok Sabha were passed with less than one hour of debate.
 - Limited debate and committee scrutiny can affect the quality of legislation and executive accountability.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 85** – Provides for summoning Parliament and requires that no more than 6 months elapse between the last sitting of one session and the first sitting of the next.
- **Article 118** – Empowers each House of Parliament to make rules regulating its procedure and conduct of business.

What Reforms are Needed to Improve Parliament's Functioning?

- **Fixed sitting days** – Provide a statutory minimum number of parliamentary working days annually.
 - The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution recommended at least 120 sitting days for the Lok Sabha.
- **Protect parliamentary time** – Allocate adequate, protected time for Question Hour, Zero Hour, debates and Private Member's Business.
- **Strengthen committees** – Expand parliamentary committee capacity and provide sufficient time and expertise for detailed scrutiny of legislation.
- **Improve productivity** – Minimise disruptions and ensure that important Bills and budgetary proposals receive meaningful debate.
- **Balance representation with participation** – Increase the number of MPs alongside the House's working hours and institutional capacity.

What lies ahead?

- Effective parliamentary democracy requires not only adequate representation but also meaningful participation.
- Delimitation and an increase in MPs must be accompanied by longer sitting hours, stronger committee scrutiny and protected debate time to improve legislative quality and executive accountability.

Reference

[The Hindu| Revamp functioning of Parliament](#)