

Bill No. LVII of 2024

THE PARLIAMENT (PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT) BILL, 2024

A
BILL

to provide for a framework for enhancing the performance of the Parliament by fixing minimum number of sittings for each House of Parliament, extending the hours of a sitting, introduction of a short Session of Parliament in addition to the existing practice of three Sessions, institution of a mechanism to separately discuss opposition business, compensation for the hours unutilized due to disruptions and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I
PRELIMINARY

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| 5 | 1. | (1) This Act may be called the Parliament (Productivity Enhancement) Act, 2024. | Short title and commencement. |
| | | (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint. | |

Definitions.

2. (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—
- (a) “Committee” means the Opposition Business Committee constituted under section 7;
- (b) “disruptions” means the act of shouting of slogans or expressing violent behaviour or coming to the well of the House which leads to substantial delays in transaction of business or adjournment of the House; 5
- (c) “interruption” means interjection by a Member during the speech of another Member;
- (d) “Member” means Member of either House of Parliament, as the case may be; and 10
- (e) “opposition business” means the agenda and debates brought forward by the Members of the non-ruling parties.

CHAPTER II

SESSIONS OF EACH HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT 15

Number of Sessions in a year.

3. **Subject to the provisions contained in article 85 of the Constitution, there shall be at least four Sessions, including a Short Session, of each House of Parliament in a year.**

Short Session.

4. (1) A short session of each House of Parliament in a year shall entail the following, namely:— 20
- (a) the Session shall be of minimum fifteen days duration;
- (b) the Session shall only be devoted to deliberation on at least two most urgent matters of public importance and no other business including Government legislative business shall be conducted;
- (c) the agenda for the Session may be decided by all political parties represented in each House of Parliament; 25
- (d) each political party may submit at least two matters for intended discussion in the Short Session to the Business Advisory Committee of the respective Houses of Parliament in accordance with the rules, as may be prescribed; and 30
- (e) the Business Advisory Committee of the respective Houses of Parliament shall decide the final topics for discussion and recommend allocation of time for such discussions in each House.

CHAPTER III

SITTINGS OF THE PARLIAMENT 35

Minimum number of sittings of each House of Parliament in a year.

5. Each House of Parliament shall compulsorily sit for not less than one hundred and twenty days in a year.

Motion for extension of a sitting.

6. (1) Except during Private Members’ Business, a Member may move a motion, without a prior notice, to extend a sitting beyond the scheduled hour of adjournment for the purpose of considering a specified item of business subject to the following conditions: 40

- (a) the motion shall relate to the business being considered at that point of time;

(b) the motion shall be proposed in the last hour before the scheduled hour of adjournment; and

(c) the motion shall not be subject to debate or amendment.

5 (2) In putting the question on such motion, the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, shall collect voices both of 'Ayes' and 'Noes' in such manner as may be prescribed and the question before the House shall be determined accordingly.

CHAPTER IV OPPOSITION BUSINESS COMMITTEE

10 7. (1) The Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, shall, from time to time, constitute an Opposition Business Committee in each House of Parliament consisting of eight Members to be nominated in such manner as may be prescribed.

Constitution of the Opposition Business Committee.

15 (2) The Committee constituted under sub-section (1) shall hold office until a new Committee is nominated.

8. (1) The Chairman of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, from amongst the members of the Committee.

Chairman of the Committee.

20 (2) If the Chairperson of the Committee is for any reason unable to act, the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, may appoint another Chairperson of the Committee in his or her place.

(3) If the Chairperson of the Committee is absent from any meeting, the Committee shall choose another member of the Committee to act as a Chairperson of the Committee for that meeting.

25 9. The quorum of the Committee shall be four.

Quorum.

10. (1) It shall be the function of the Committee to recommend the opposition business to be taken up in a sitting of the respective House of Parliament, on Monday during the Session periods other than a Short Session and also the time that shall be allocated for such opposition business.

Functions of the Committee.

30 (2) The business recommended by the Committee shall have precedence over Government business.

CHAPTER V INTERRUPTION OR DISRUPTION OF BUSINESS

35 11. A Member must not be interrupted, except by the Chairman or the Speaker or the Member presiding in the Chair, as the case may be, or another Member who is—

Exceptions for interruption.

(a) raising a point of order; or

40 (b) trying to clarify some matter raised by the Member in his or her speech, but only if the Member speaking is willing to give way and resume his or her seat and the Member wishing to interrupt is called by the Chairman or the Speaker or the Member presiding in the Chair, as the case may be.

45 12. (1) The number of hours lost due to disruptions shall be compensated by extending the Session of the respective House of Parliament by as many hours which were lost on account of adjournment of the sittings due to disruptions.

Extension of session.

(2) For the purposes of sub-section (1), the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, shall have inherent powers to extend the Session of the

respective House of Parliament.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

Amendment of
the Rules of
Procedure.

- 13.** The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha may be amended, as deemed necessary, for the implementation of the provisions of this Act. 5

Power to make
rules.

- 14.** The Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

As the central institution of democracy, the Indian Parliament expresses the faith of the people and embodies the will of those in the Government. As the representative of India's diverse population, Parliament has a unique responsibility of balancing competing interests and catering to the needs of the people through democratic means of deliberations and discussions. The Indian Parliament which witnessed its most productive Sessions during the initial decades suffers from a limited number of sittings, frequent disruptions, and high absenteeism in the 21st century. The drastic reduction of Parliament productivity has seriously deteriorated the quality of discussion and hampered overall efficiency.

The Parliament is the sole institution that secures the interests of the country as a whole. Apart from the regular legislative business, it also ensures that the Government is fully accountable to the people through the participation of non-ruling parties. However, the current framework does not adequately provide the Members of the opposition parties with means to intervene and lead discussions which lead to more delays and disruptions. Consequently, both Houses of Parliament are not able to perform the crucial function of parliamentary oversight.

It is imperative to urgently reform and strengthen the existing system which is only possible by extending the number of days the Parliament functions. To keep up with the rapidly changing needs of the people, the working hours of Parliament should in no situation be reduced due to delays or disruptions. Further, a separate mechanism for the opposition parties to put forward the most pressing issues of the people could substantially bring down the incidences of disorder in both Houses of Parliament.

The Bill seeks to achieve the above-stated objectives.

MANOJ KUMAR JHA

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for at least four Sessions including a Short Session to be held in Parliament every year instead of the existing practice of three Sessions in a year. Thus the Bill, if enacted, would involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is estimated that a recurring expenditure of about Rupees One hundred and thirty-five crore per annum is likely to be involved from the Consolidated Fund of India.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 14 empowers the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, Lok Sabha, as the case may be, to make rules for carrying out the provisions of the Act. The matters in respect of which the rules may be made are of procedure and administrative details and as such, it is not practicable to provide for them in the proposed Bill itself. The delegation of legislative power is, therefore, of a normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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to provide for a framework for enhancing the performance of the Parliament by fixing minimum number of sittings for each House of Parliament, extending the hours of a sitting, introduction of a short Session of Parliament in addition to the existing practice of three Sessions, institution of a mechanism to separately discuss opposition business, compensation for the hours unutilized due to disruptions and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

(Shri Manoj Kumar Jha, M.P.)