

INDIAN DEMOCRACY IN APPLICATION

PERFORMANCE OF XV LOK SABHA - A PERSPECTIVE

Lok Sabha Performance Overview - Parliamentary Oversight

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This research report has been compiled by ReZorce Research Foundation for purpose of information dissemination and serious discussion on the state of today's Parliament in India. All information is sourced from official documents published by different departments concerned. You agree to credit ReZorce Research Foundation for any information used from this report. All inferences are responsibility of ReZorce and no one else. Please contact Narendra KV, Director for any further information

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Research Purpose

Democracy is the single biggest achievement that we can claim as a country. Democracy is not just about elections. It is more about what happens between elections.

We have analyzed the performance of XV Lok Sabha in great detail. Our purpose is to identify specific performance gaps and also to identify members who have done a great job. It is our belief that all stakeholders have to continuously contribute to make things work. It is our belief that Parliament can only be successful if parties plan and execute their agenda.

Indian Parliament, like all institutions, needs feedback and collective resolution to become responsive to popular aspirations. Democratic practice is an expensive exercise. It is also an involved exercise. An audit of specific performance parameters would help practitioners make the institution more relevant to the aspirations of the citizens. Constant public review is the best safeguard to assure ourselves that we are getting the best returns for our collective investment in this institution. This study is an exercise in that direction.

The culmination of XV Lok Sabha gives us an opportunity to examine the state of our democratic institutions. We analyze whether Parliamentary India is experiencing tiredness or is as vigorous as in the past 63 years.

We had shared the performance of XV Lok Sabha with respect to sessions and disruptions in our first report. This second report focuses on Legislation. This is the third report and the focus is on **Parliamentary Oversight**.

Parliament builds the framework for governance through budgets and legislation. Executive executes Parliament's policy directions. Members have a chance to verify and check on the performance of the executive through questions and debates. This section focuses on both the efficiency and effectivity of such intervention.

Questions

Questions are one of the most powerful Parliamentary tools to seek factual information from the government on issues of public interest within the scope of parliamentary jurisdiction. It is a fantastic oversight tool, where a member can seek information on progress or otherwise of all executive activity.

Mere seeking information is an efficiency aspect of the Parliament. Any member can seek written or oral answers to their questions.

1. A question that seeks a response on the floor of the house is a starred question
2. Questions' where the government shares answers in writing by placing them on the table of the house is un-starred questions.
3. A short notice question is the third category of question, where a member may seek questions on a matter of urgent public importance with notice shorter than 21 days
4. Private member questions are asked of other members, on issues related to bills, debates, resolutions or any other parliamentary participation

Any of the first three kinds of questions may lead to further action. The aspect of business that leads to an official response is the effectivity aspect of questions. The effectivity aspect is defined in terms of

1. Supplementary questions
2. Governmental Assurances
3. Debate – Half – An – Hour Discussion [Rule 55]

The third paradigm of Parliamentary Oversight through questions relates to the quality of questions. A large amount of money is spent seeking answers to questions from across the country. The entire government machinery is involved in this exercise.

A perusal of questions that this study covered broadly covered three kinds of questions

1. Questions related to state / constituency, coming within the broad interest of voters and which has residual public relations benefits
2. Questions related to specific activities that is of public interest and could be introduced at the bidding of interested parties

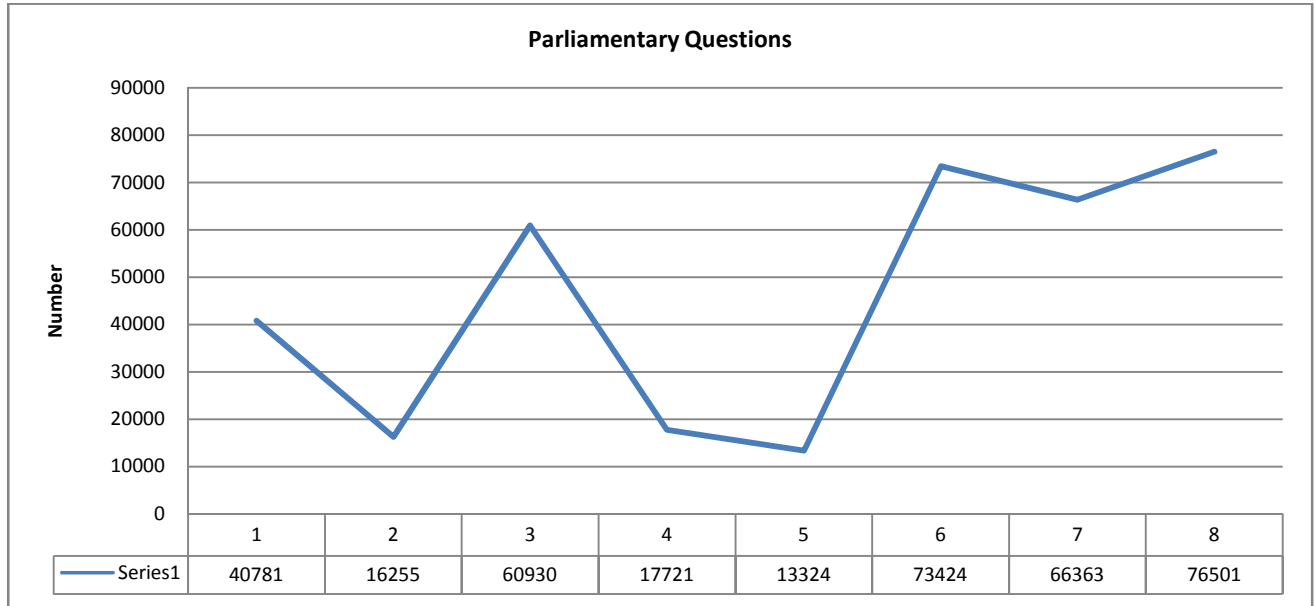
3. Questions that can broadly help or clarify policy or implementation issues specific to certain industries.

There has been Parliamentary debates on members getting paid for asking questions on behalf of private business interests. There appears parliamentary oversight on this problem, but the issue is serious and cannot go away in a hurry. Even western democracies have this problem, but in many countries lobbying is legitimate and firms can legally lobby the government through public representatives.

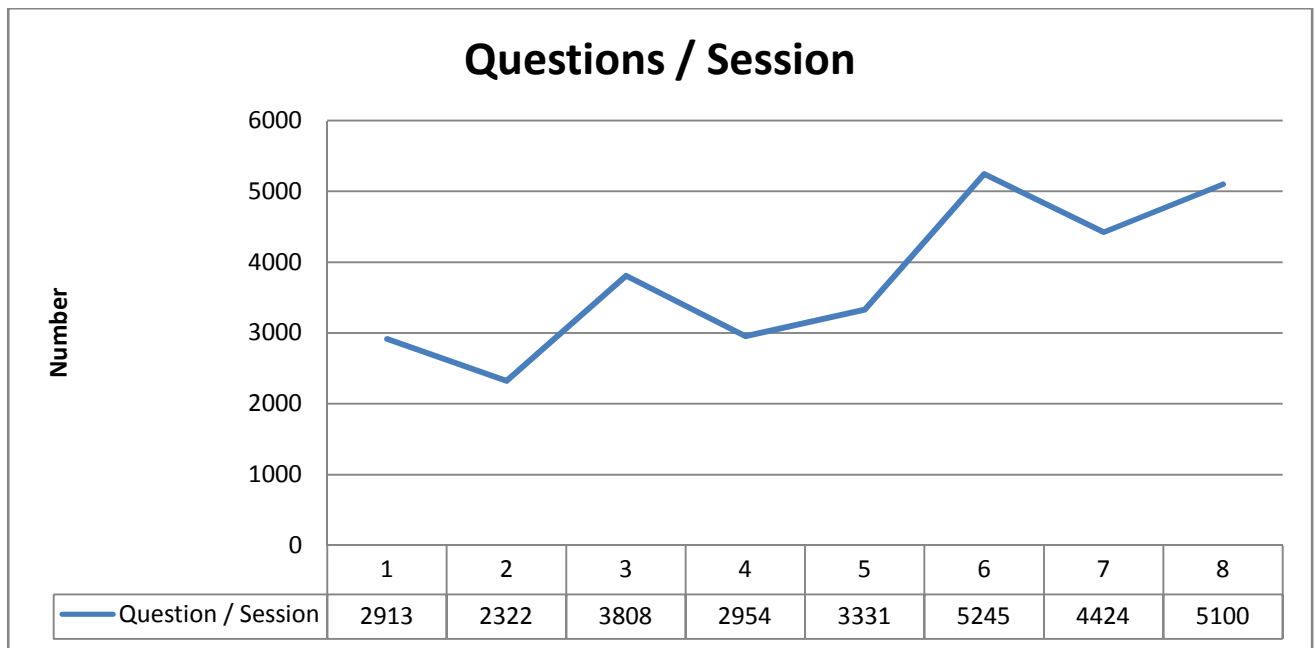
Bolangir MP from Odisha, Mr. Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo [Biju Janata Dal] had introduced a Private Members' Bill [Bill number 14 of 2013] to prevent this problem. The Bill sought to set up an Authority to register lobbyists and bring transparency in the process. The bill is currently pending review. An Authority akin to what was suggested would have forced MPs to reveal on which companies behalf they are seeking information. That is not possible currently. Any conjecture would at best be speculation at this stage.

With the introduction of "Right to Information" Act, any Indian citizen can access public information. This act should have actually reduced the number of questions in the house, since category 2 and category 3 can access much information in a much shorter period of time through the RTI than to approach a Parliament member for the same information. Businessmen, it appears, still prefer to liaise through the parliament route.

Questions – Problem of Plenty ...



Source: Statement of Work, Lok Sabha – Annual Statements



Source: Statement of Work, Lok Sabha – Annual Statements

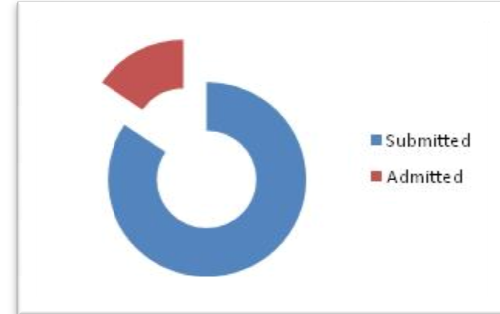
We have information from 1984 till date. The welcome trend is that the question hour in the Lok Sabha has become busy. The number of questions per session has increased from **2,913 per session to 5,100 per session**. The number of questions per member has increased from **5.78 / session / member to 9.39 / session / member**.

During the XV Lok Sabha, members across the spectrum sought answers for **76,501** questions.

Nagging Quality Issues

Steep Drop Post - Review

Lok Sabha has a review process before a question is admitted. The government answers only an admitted question and not every question that is submitted by the government. The Parliamentary procedure is very explicit about the kinds of issues on which a member can ask questions and what should be avoided



416,843 questions were submitted by members in the XV Lok Sabha. Some of the questions were clubbed and others were rejected. At the end of the process, **76,501** questions were admitted. The Lok Sabha secretariat apparently has an extremely tough review mechanism, since they have rejected **340,342** questions. In short, only **18.35%** of questions actually get admitted.

Despite the tough review process, the quality of questions is indifferent and one never knows the motive behind such questions. Three different issues we notice include:

1. Questions asked with simplicity
2. Questions that are best high school general knowledge quiz
3. Questions with answers on Ministry website

Simplicity Based Questions

Some questions, under review, bordered on simplicity. The member obviously had no clue on what he was seeking and the answer provided was even more bizarre.

We have indicated some illustrations in this section. The purpose is not to hurt either the member or the official who supplied the answers, but is meant to showcase absence of focus in the whole process

Lok Sabha

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 4005
ANSWERED ON 18.12.2012
WORLD HERITAGE STATUS TO HAMPI

4005 Shri BAIDYANATH PRASAD MAHTO

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:-

(a) whether the Government proposes to take any steps to get the Tungabhadra river later known as Hampi accorded a World Heritage status;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government has held any talks with UNESCO in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE (SMT. CHANDRESH KUMARI KATOCH)

(a) No Sir. No proposal has been received from the State Government of Karnataka or any other organization to accord World Heritage status to Tungabhadra river.

(b) Does not arise. to

(e)

Questions like above indicate a lack of application and seriousness in the whole process. It makes for bigger numbers, but is a terrible waste of time.

High School Quiz

Parliamentary questions are not quiz competition for senior officers. Asking vague questions that is not administratively important or can contribute to any serious decision process is another waste of time. A significant percentage of questions make for good high school quiz, but does not help either the member or his constituents or the country any wiser

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 6709
ANSWERED ON 06.05.2010
AEROSPACE HUB IN ANDHRA PRADESH

6709 Shri RAJAGOPAL LAGADAPATI

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh is rapidly becoming aerospace hub of the country;
(b) if so, the details thereof; and
(c) the steps taken by the Government to help Andhra Pradesh technically and otherwise to make it a aerospace hub?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL)

(a),(b) and (c):- Government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to establish aviation specific Speical Economic Zone. Government of India will facilitate the Andhra Pradesh Government towards any assistance they may seek.

Information on Websites

Unlike in the past, ministry / departmental websites carry a lot of information about their programs, achievements and policies. Many public institutions, especially the knowledge commission, have extremely elaborate information on their websites. Parliamentarians also have the privilege of directly interfacing with the concerned officials and seeking specific queries.

Submitting questions about information that is already available on the concerned Ministry's website is also a waste of executive time.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PLANNING
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 1534
ANSWERED ON 15.07.2009
RECOMMENDATIONS OF NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMISSION

1534 Shri KAVURI SAMBA SIVA RAO

Will the Minister of **PLANNING** be pleased to state:-

(a) the details of the recommendations in the recently submitted report of the National Knowledge Commission regarding higher education in the country; and

(b) the action taken by the Government on the recommendations to strengthen the State universities and giving them same treatment as that of Central universities?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

(a): Relevant extracts of National Knowledge Commission's recommendations along with Note on Higher Education are enclosed.

(b): There is no specific recommendation on strengthening State Universities and giving them same treatment as that of Central Universities.

Questions should not be looked in isolation. Questions should result in follow-up action in the form of [1] Supplementary Questions [2] Half – An – Hour Discussion [Rule 55] and [3] Assurances. The performance of this Lok Sabha from this perspective is poor.

Member – wise performance

Members with most number of admitted questions are the following:

ANAND RAO ADSUL	SHIV SENA	AMRAVATHI, MAHARASHTRA	1212
ASADUDDIN OWAISI	MAJLIS-E-ITTEHADUL MUSLIMEEN	HYDERABAD, AP	1086
PRADEEP MAJHI	INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	NABARANGAPURA, ODISHA	1067
SHIVAJI ADHALRAO PATIL	SHIV SENA	SHIRUR, MAHARASHTRA	1030

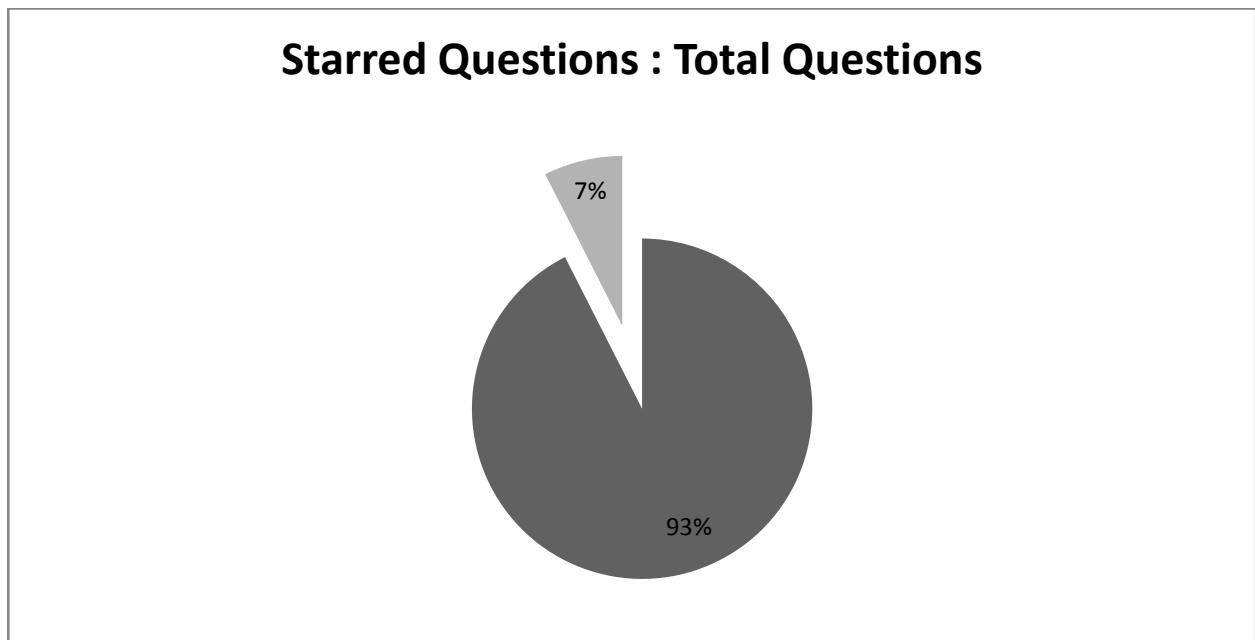
Session – wise Best Performance

Session	Particulars	Member	Questions
I	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	NO QUESTION HOUR	
II	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	ANAND RAO ADSUL [AMRAVATHI, MA – SHIV SENA]	121
III	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	VARUN FEROZE GANDHI [PILIBHIT, UP – BJP]	108
IV	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR [ZAHIRABAD, AP – INC]	137
V	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	ANAND RAO ADSUL [AMRAVATHI, MA – SHIV SENA]	82
VI	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	PRADEEP MAJHI [NABARANGAPURA, OR – INC]	87
VII	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	ASADUDDIN OWAISI [HYDERABAD, AP – MIM] YASHVIR SINGH [NAGINA, UP – SAMAJWADI]	60
VIII	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	SHIVAJI ADHAL RAO PATIL [SHIRUR, MA – SHIV SENA]	94
IX	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	DHARMENDRA YADAV [BADAUN, UP – SAMAJWADI]	71
X	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR [ZAHIRABAD, AP – INC]	55
XI	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MAADAM [JAMNAGAR, GUJ – INC]	32
XII	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	SS RAMASUBBU [TIRUNELVELI, TN – INC] SUGAVANAM EG [KRISHNAGIRI, TN – DMK]	36
XIII	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MAADAM [JAMNAGAR, GUJ – INC] HAMDULLAH SAYEED [LAKSHADWEEP – INC] SUGAVANAM EG [KRISHNAGIRI, TN – DMK]	55
XIV	MAXIMUM QUESTIONS	SHIVAJI ADHAL RAO PATIL [SHIRUR, MA – SHIV SENA] ANAND RAO ADSUL [AMRAVATHI, MA – SHIV SENA]	67

Starred Questions

Members can choose to have a minister answer questions on the floor of the house by indicating a question as a “starred question”. After a minister answers the questions, the member has an opportunity to seek more information. 20 questions are answered on a daily basis by the government. Each member can theoretically have one starred question a day.

Total Questions	76,501
Starred Questions	6,181
Percentage of SQ / TQ	0.08%

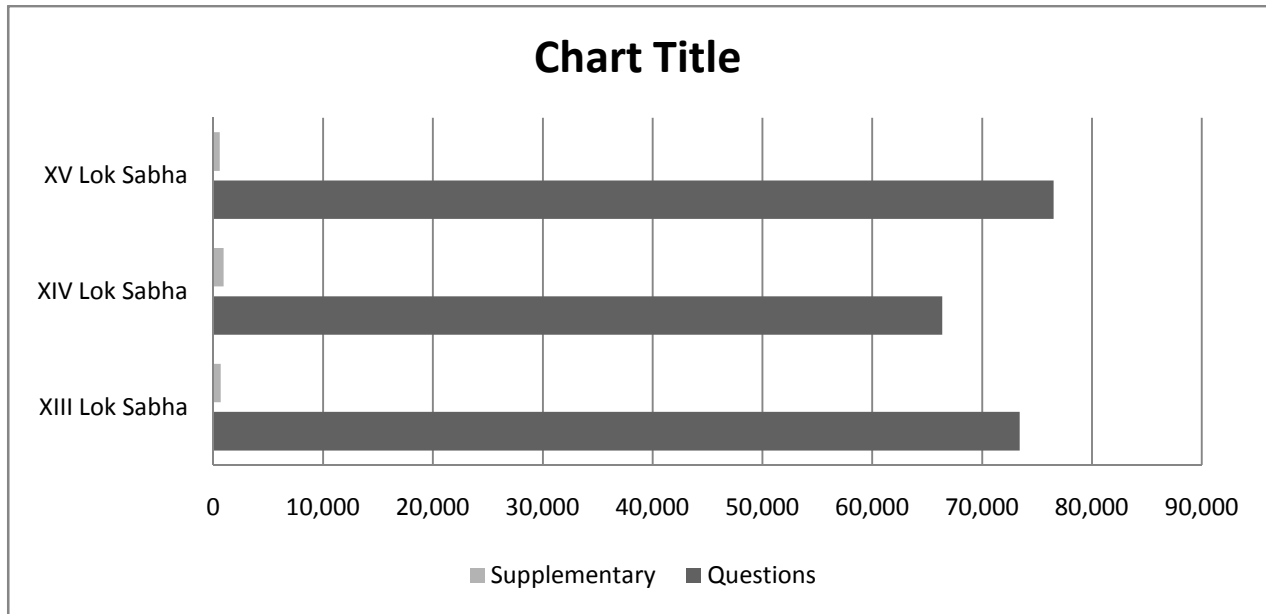


Parliament sat for 542 days during the period. Government could have answered a total of 10,840 starred questions on the floor of the house. Members choose to ask 6,181 questions [i.e. 57% of possible questions government could have answered during the time].

Does India have no administrative / executive / implementation problems that members can hold the government accountable for?

Supplementary Questions

Lok Sabha	Questions	Supplementary	Percentage
XIII Lok Sabha	73,424	671	0.91%
XIV Lok Sabha	66,363	940	1.42%
XV Lok Sabha	76,501	590	0.77%

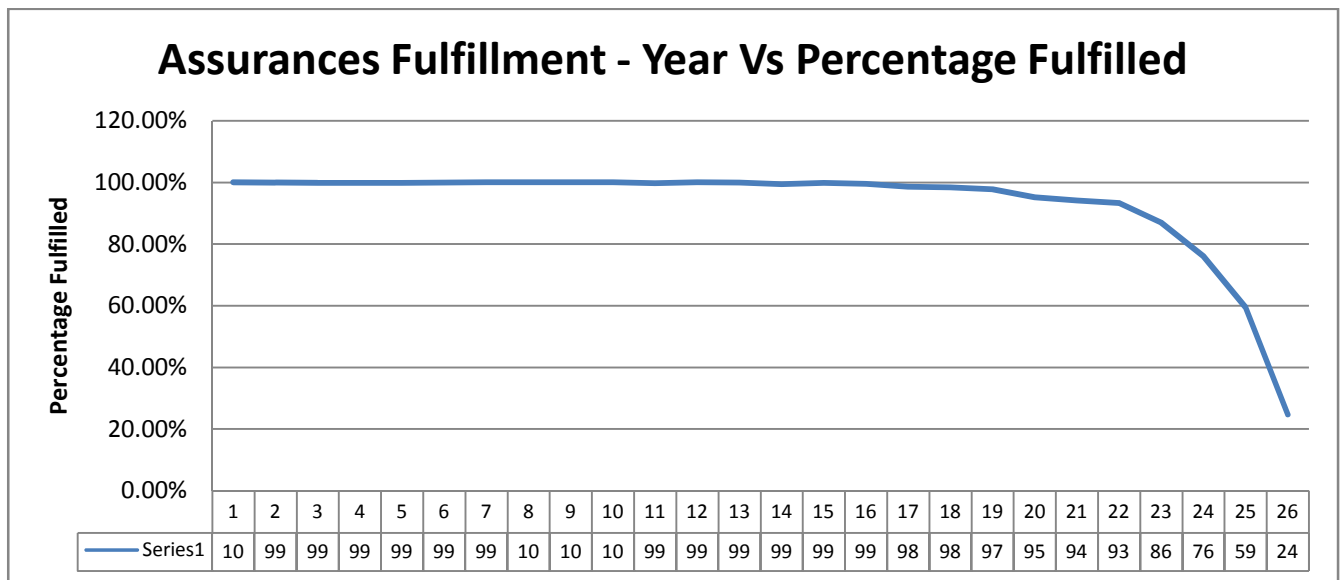


Out of the 76,501 questions asked in this session, members followed up with supplementary questions in only 590 cases. This is just 0.77% of the total questions. This is lower than the 0.91% in XIII Lok Sabha and 1.42% in IV Lok Sabha.

Questions - Pending Assurances

Assurance Pending > 20 Years	5
Assurance Pending > 15 Years & < 20 Years	12
Assurance Pending > 10 Years & < 15 Years	83
Assurance Pending > 5 Years & < 10 Years	394
Assurance Pending > 3 Years & < 5 Years	946
Assurance Pending > 1 Year & < 3 Years	1720
Assurance Pending < 1 Year	0
TOTAL	3160

Source: MPA – NIC



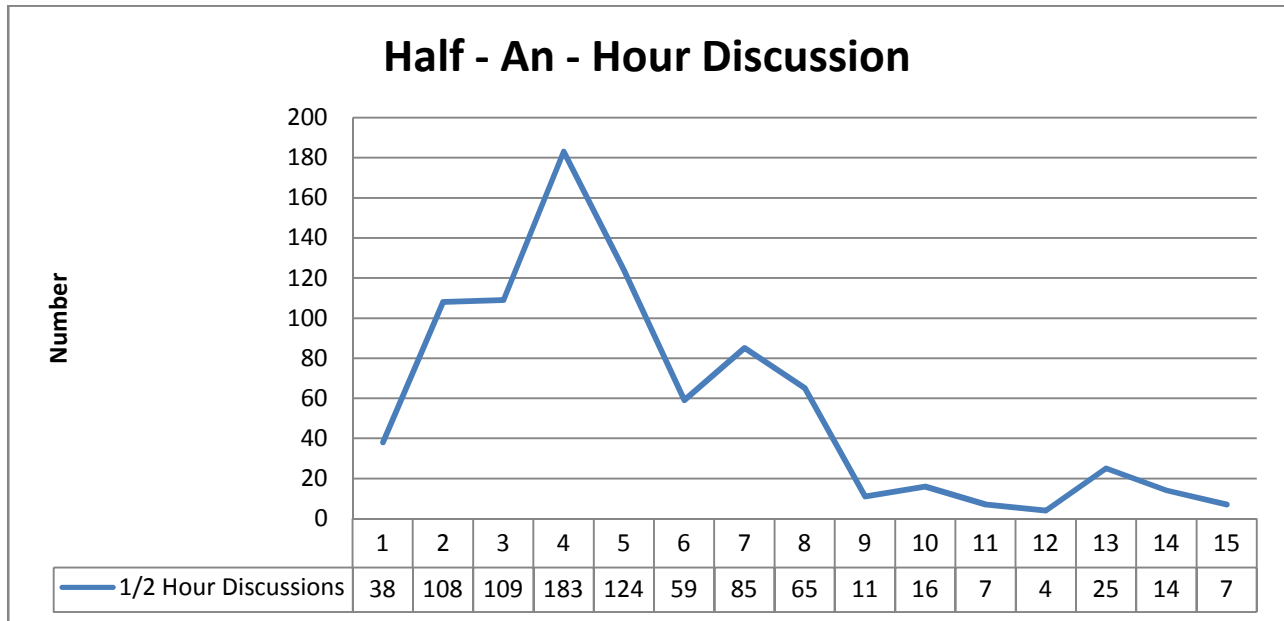
It is inconceivable that there are 8 assurances made during Rajiv Gandhi’s government are still pending implementation. Assurances are a process within the government where executive takes an implementation decision after review and decision. Whatever the structure of the government or the politics of its formation, a government assurance on the floor of the Parliament needs to be implemented with alacrity.

It is apparent that successive speakers and Parliamentary Affairs ministers have not evinced interest to review the fulfillment of assurances that governments have committed on the floor of the house and their implementation.

At this time, of the 4,493 assurances that have been given by the UPA II in the XV Lok Sabha, only 1,258 [27.99%] are fulfilled and the unfulfilled percentage is 72.01%.

A strong indication of how seriously the executive views the parliament.

Half - An - Hour Discussion [Rule 55]



Source: Statement of Work, Lok Sabha – Annual Statements

Half - An - Hour Discussions under Rule 55 is a tool to elucidate and get more information about answers received from the government. It provides a forum for members to nail government on fact or demand policy review.

It appears that not more **seven** questions required members to seek a discussion under Rule 55.

Half - An - Hour Discussions were used effectively in the II, III, IV and V Lok Sabha. It appears that the effervescence of twenty years is not present today.

The seven discussions is the second lowest number of such interventions in the history of Lok Sabha. The XII Lok Sabha had 4 discussions in the brief period of just over a year. This Lok Sabha worked for the entire tenure and the number was 7. Many of the debatable issues raised in an adhoc manner by the manner that resulted in ego clashes could have been managed better by resorting to the available tools.

About Rezorce Research Foundation

Rezorce Research Foundation [http://www.rezorce.com/rezorce_research_foundation] is a not – for – profit research foundation registered under the Trusts Act. We focus on research in three different areas: [1] Staffing; [2] Forensic Research; [3] Software Labs and [4] Public Policy. Our achievements in the last three years are as follows:

1. Forensic Research

- a. We are one of the only Forensic research organizations in the private sector globally focused on business intelligence
- b. We have four patents in the areas of investigation and verification
- c. “Role Based Verification” is a service focused to help Indian private sector companies eliminate résumé padding during hiring

2. Staffing

- a. We have listed 7,000+ bogus employers on our web portal, Rezorce~Check Employer Red Data around India [<http://www.rezorce.com/rezorcecheckemployerredata.php>].
- b. These companies are in the business of giving fake employment offers and certificates and cheating people
- c. The portal access is given free to all Employers. 13,500+ access the portal every month

3. Software Labs

- a. We manage 28 Professional Groups on LinkedIn. Senior architects globally interact professionally through these forums on software architecture and design related areas
- b. 8 of the Groups have the largest professional members from around the world in their space. 18 other groups are among the Top 5 in their technology space globally.

4. Public Policy

- a. Our intervention is to make parliamentary and legislative bodies function better
- b. We contribute to public debate that Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha invite through different committees.
- c. We believe that petitions are a powerful tool for a common man in a democracy to get administration to act. We have filed petitions to the committee of petitions in different areas to validate our beliefs
- d. We have actively contributed in the following areas:
 - i. Reducing banking frauds and NPA through better risk management
 - ii. Hoysala temples on Karnataka tourist circuit