

Original Article

The Evolution of Parliamentary Procedures in India: Institutional Practices and Reform Trajectories in the 21st Century

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India is currently in its 21st century, and in this article, we discuss the history of parliamentary procedures in the country, with particular emphasis on institutional practices, and reform trajectories (also over time) in the 21st century. Parliament, as the principal deliberative space in India's parliamentary democracy, exerts legislative, representational, deliberative, financial and accountability functions through a complex universe defined by constitutional provisions, procedural rules and conventions, norms, and committees. Parliamentary functioning, however, has evolved over the years under the sway of increased executive control, regular disruptions, reduced time for deliberations, transformation in the conduct of legislative business, and with increasing specific needs for procedural innovations and democratic accountabilities. In this context, the article examines the continuity and change over time in India's parliamentary practices through its embedded constitutional roots, functioning and recent attempts for reform. This article takes an institutional and political science lens to examine how, from the democratic normative and governance necessity perspective, parliamentary procedures have adapted over time. It assesses essential procedural areas legislative business, Question Hour, Zero Hour, motions and debates, financial control, committee oversight, party discipline, and presiding officers. To do this, we focus on 21st century reforms of parliamentary practices to enhance efficiency and transparency, productivity, and responsiveness to the public while accounting for lasting complaints about diminished deliberation, dependence, and expedience, and weakened opposition scrutinization of the executive. Abstract: The study contends that over the years, the evolution of parliamentary procedures in India speaks about the dialectical tension between procedural adaptability impinging upon the erosion of democratic norms. It argues that addressing the governance challenge requires sound institutional reform that enhances deliberative quality, strengthens institutional autonomy and anchors procedural accountability to safeguard the representative-constitutional character of India's Parliament in contemporary times.

Keywords: Indian Parliament, parliamentary procedures, legislative process, parliamentary reform, democratic accountability, institutional change, political science, 21st century India

Introduction and Background related to the study

As the largest democracy in the world, India has a parliamentary democracy that emerged from the Constitution of 1950, establishing a bicameral parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) and intertwined processes to provide the checks and balances expected from any democratic governance, such as deliberation, accountability, and representation within a legislature (Basu, 2021; Kashyap, 2020), where parliamentary procedures that originate from diverse aspects of legislation and parliamentary functioning-whether it is the multiple stages of a bill from introduction, debate, scrutiny, and passage, the examination of public policies through various parliamentary means such as Question Hour, Zero Hour, financial scrutiny, and committee scrutiny, or the use of motions, debates, or votes-are not simply technical paraphernalia but cathedral instruments of democratic legitimacy, executive accountability, and public policy scrutiny (Mezey, 2019; Shankar & Rodrigues, 2011).

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whose effectiveness is continuously improvised within the legislature based on the dynamic interaction between formal and informal rules, political party behavior, and institutional norms that largely determine the legislative outcome, often sometimes even in favor of contemporary needs to ensure democratic legitimacy and executive accountability, yet the 21st century has witnessed an apparent shift in how the grounds of parliamentary functioning have taken subtle undertones to be configured towards impeding formal legislative processes like hasty rush of legislations without debates or scrutiny with reduced average discussion time in the Lok Sabha sessions lately, incessant disruption and adjournment causing massive loss of productive parliamentary hours, less usage of department-related standing committees to provide detailed scrutiny of legislation, and the executive narrowing the legislative agenda, compressing the deliberative processes (PRS Legislative Research, 2023; Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 2022), coupled with larger existential challenges such as growing containment of party discipline using whip, the frequent promulgation of the ordinance, and the emergence of mediatization of parliamentary debates directing concerns over erosion of deliberative quality and institutional balance, yet simultaneously, also contemporaneous efforts have ensued in reforms related to the substance of legislative functioning with the introduction of the e-Parliament idea followed by digital documentation, online committee functioning, enhanced access to records of Parliament, and the list of publications either semi-officially or through civil society where aspirations have been raised for improving transparency, efficiency, and access to citizens around legislative functioning (Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2023; Malhotra, 2022), pointing to a complex interplay between evolution of institutional traditions and strains on democratic functions, and to political science, the study of parliamentary procedures in India represents an anomaly and is representative of circumstantial themes that have larger implications for the evolution of legislative institutionalism, executive-legislative relations, and deliberative democratization in large and diverse political systems, largely demonstrating how procedural design and political practice affect governance outcomes, and in this line of research, the present study will aim at comprehending the evolution of parliamentary procedures in India and examining how the reforms of the 21st century have restructured its institutional practices, deliberative functioning, and democratic accountability, framed around the principal questions relating to the nature of the procedural change, the extent of functional efficiency of core parliamentary mechanisms, along with implications of the reform initiatives for democratic goals, crystallizing the central argument that the procedural reforms have been instrumental in advancing broader elements of modernization and efficiency, while not effectually fortifying deliberative depth or institutional accountability, towards grappling with the perennial problem of executive dominance and procedural disruptions, and accordingly, the study is scoped to provide such a qualitative institutional analysis of parliamentary procedures in the 21st century based on constitutional provisions, rules, committee reports, and secondary literature, while recognizing limitations as it is not a quantitative modeling with comprehensive empirical studies or tracts on publicly available institutional data, which perhaps limit the generalizability of findings, but in any case proffer a comprehensive analytical substrate for the contemporary parliamentary evolutionary stories of India.

Research questions

1. How have parliamentary procedures in India evolved institutionally since the beginning of the 21st century?
2. What are the key procedural mechanisms that structure parliamentary functioning in India?
3. What reform trajectories have emerged in response to challenges of efficiency, accountability, and representation?
4. To what extent have these reforms strengthened or weakened deliberative democracy?

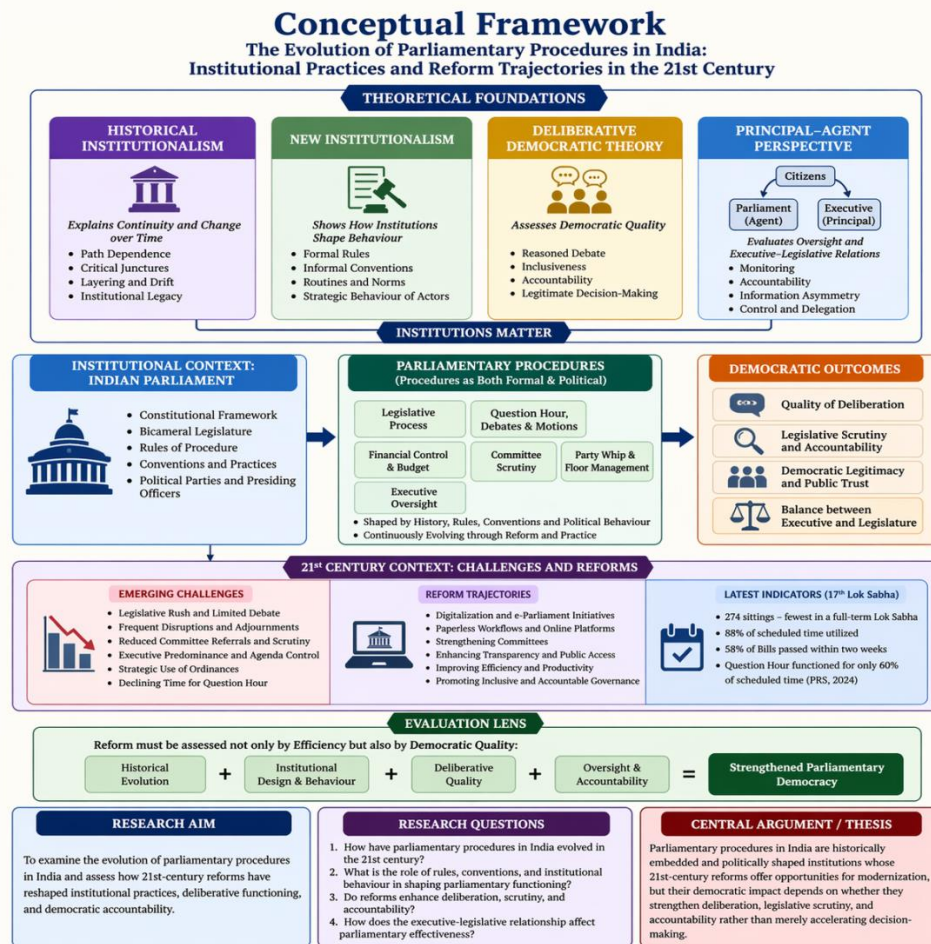
Review of Literature

The academic literature on parliamentary processes in India exhibits a complex yet fragmentary engagement across a number of fields of political science inquiry, beginning with seminal works on parliamentary democracy and institutionalism that conceptualize legislatures as procedural arenas in which formal rules and informal understandings influence political outcomes, where design matters in establishing mechanisms of democratic accountability (see e.g., Lijphart, 2012; Norton, 2013); legislative studies and institutional design literature that examines how agenda-setting powers, time allotment, and the committee system determine the quality of legislation and executive oversight (Martin & Vanberg, 2011; Saalfeld, 2014) and deliberative democracy theorists who stress the normative significance of deliberation, inclusion and transparency as key features of parliamentary performance (e.g., Habermas, 1996; Fishkin, 2018); together with early institutional analyses documenting the constitutional basis (Austin, 1999; Kashyap, 2015) and joint sitting framework of the Indian Parliament, demonstrating how constitutional articles, rules of procedure and conventions together provide a framework for legislative power and executive accountability; yet further empirical treatment suggests a transformation of parliamentary behavior evidenced by an expanding transactional pseudo-parliament, showing a substantial decrease in average number of sitting days in the 21st century compared to earlier decades as well as an increase in the number of bills passed without appropriate debate or committee scrutiny (Chakrabarti & Sanyal, 2022; PRS Legislative Research, 2024); disruption research suggesting that procedural maneuvers of political parties have increasingly turned what should be indicative of legislative deliberation into instruments of conflict (Kapur & Mehta, 2018); parallel parliamentary committee literature drawing attention both strength of institutional scrutiny of executive and under-utilization of this scrutiny (Dutta & Roy, 2020) related to falling rates of bill references to department-related standing committees (Agarwal, 2021); and comparative studies of

parliamentary reform in democracies elsewhere, including the UK and Canada demonstrating mechanisms for strengthening committee oversight, establishing fixed legislative calendars and mandating greater transparency (Russell & Gover, 2017; Docherty, 2019) that may be relied upon to evaluate India, where the change in the relationship between the executive and legislature has drawn persistent scholarly interest, where studies point to growing executive dominance, the regular use of ordinances and the centralism of party decision-making (Mehta, 2020; Tillin, 2021) raising alarms over the decline of legislative integrity and deliberative capacity despite significant scholarship illuminating one dimension or another such as disarray, output and institutional decay, remains limited in its perception in its focus on units of analysis and lack of connection between parliamentary process development and broader institutional and reform-oriented analysis adding up to what is a major gap in the literature, since very few studies have systematically examined, in the manner I do, how parliamentary practices have changed during the 21st century in India as a result of both internal institutional pressure and external democratic needs and how parliamentary changes over the course of reform designed to bring improvements in efficiency, transparency, and accountability, and it is this gap that the present reconstruction of institutionalist framework fills by providing a comprehensive contextual framework of practices for parliamentary system development equilibrated between constitutional provision, parliamentary process function, and reform trajectory, thereby bringing together isolated pieces and providing the nucleus for a potentially solid understanding of parliamentary change in contemporary India.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for analyzing the transformative journeys of parliamentary procedures in India which underscores the institutional practices and reform trajectories in the 21st century is best located at the intersection of historical institutionalism and deliberative democratic theory, supplemented analytically with perspectives from new institutionalism and the principal-agent approach as they are collectively required to explain not only why parliamentary institutions are important and how procedures are at once formal rules and political instruments, but also more centrally, why reform needs to be assessed temporally in terms of democratic quality rather than merely in terms of administrative efficiency and flexibility (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Historical Institutionalism, 2025) because historical institutionalism is especially suited to tracing continuity and change over time by focusing on path dependence, critical junctures, policy legacies, and gradual endogenous change – that is, layering, drift, conversion, and displacement (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Historical Institutionalism, 2025) allowing the study to explain how India's parliamentary rules, conventions, and procedural practices have evolved without being fully replaced despite pressures arising from coalition politics, majoritarian governments, digital modernization, and changing legislative workloads which combine to allude to institutional stagnation, while new institutionalism broadens this interpretation by not conceptualizing institutions as merely constitutional texts or written rules but a broader assemblage of formal procedures, routines, norms, or conventions of more or less enduring entities that structure actor behavior, privilege some interests over others, and shape the strategic choices of governments, presiding officers, party leaders, and ordinary members which (Hall & Taylor, 1996) is particularly relevant in India where devices such as the whip, scheduling powers, Question Hour, and committee referrals often function both as procedural mechanisms and instruments of political management (Hall & Taylor, 1996) and deliberative democratic theory complements this institutional lens by asking whether parliamentary procedures actually secure reasoned debate, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and public justification in legislative decision-making allowing the study to evaluate whether Parliament is passing bills in a meaningful deliberative arena but particularly post-2019 acknowledging the necessity of a more urgent concern about how despite functioning for more than 88 per cent of scheduled time overall, the 17th Lok Sabha held only 274 sittings, the fewest among full term Lok Sabhas, saw 58 per cent of bills passed within two weeks of introduction, and allowed Question Hour to function for only 60 per cent of scheduled time all of which indicate growing tensions between speed, oversight, and discussion (PRS Legislative Research, 2024), while institutional reform initiatives in digital technology supporting greater accountability, transparency, efficiency, and the ease of functioning between the executive and legislature through paperless workflow systems and the 2025 launch of NeVA 2.0 and associated parliamentary systems reveal the pointed transformation direction where the technology may enhance institutional reform but as a indicative factor does not necessarily offer more scrutiny and deliberative depth (National Informatics Centre, 2026; Press Information Bureau, 2025), and within this wider framework the principal-agent perspective will be used as a support tool identifying the reliance of Parliament as an oversight institution representing citizens through questions, debates and committees to monitor ministers and the executive making the core argument of this study from within to view parliamentary procedures in India as historically embedded, politically contested, and democratically evaluable institutions whose reform significance lies not only in procedural streamlining but their capacity to sustain accountability, legislative scrutiny, and democratic legitimacy in the 21st century.



Above diagram showing Conceptual Framework related to the study

Methodology related to the study

This study applies a qualitative institutional framework comprising descriptive and analytical elements to track the reform trajectory of parliamentary procedure in India during the 21st century, on the premise that, rather than merely a legal entity, Parliament is an ever-living institution whose functioning is influenced not only by provisions of the Constitution but also by procedural regulations, directions from presiding officers, committee work practices, conventions, and political behavior (Lok Sabha Secretariat, n.d.; Rajya Sabha Secretariat, n.d.; PRS Legislative Research, 2024); accordingly, the research design intertwines doctrinal and constitutional examination of Parliament with institutional analysis of practice, relying on primary documentary sources including the Constitution of India and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, circular directions issued by the Speaker of Lok Sabha, and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, reports prepared by respective secretariats of department-related standing committees and other parliamentary committees, recommendations made by various Parliamentary Reforms Commissions, parliamentary debates and official records hosted by parliamentary secretariats and government platforms, and secondary sources include scholarship in political science, legislative studies, constitutional law, and democratic theory that assist us in interpreting the relationship between the procedural form and institutional performance (PRS Legislative Research, 2024) so that within this design the study follows a document-based interpretive strategy to analyse how procedural regulations governing legislative business, Question Hour, motions, financial control, committee referrals and debate procedures have been operationalized, adapted, or circumvented over time with a special focus on 21st century reform trajectories around digital modernization, efficiency, accountability, and scrutiny and for enhancing the publication value of the findings the methodology also includes limited empirical indicia contextualized with credible institutional datasets and parliamentary monitoring sources that illuminate session-level productivity trajectories, numbers of sittings held, bills passed in quick succession, committee referrals, time lost to disruptions, and wider parameterization of legislative trends, for example of the 17th Lok Sabha the fewest sittings at 274 sittings among full-term Lok Sabhas functioned for 88% of scheduled time, saw 58% of bills passed within a fortnight of introduction, and had Question Hour that operated for only 60% of scheduled times, with these indicators being treated not as isolated statistical outcomes but as contextual cases of shifting procedural practice and deliberative pressures (PRS Legislative Research, 2024), and hence the methodology is designed to capture both the persistence of

institutional patterns and procedural change enabling the framing of an assessment of parliamentary reform not only as a measure of the streamlining of administrative processes and technological innovations but also as a reflection of the democratic quality of a legislature along with the nature of executive control and parliamentary accountability that is emerging in modern India.

Constitutional and Institutional Foundations of Parliamentary Procedures in India

India's parliamentary procedure regrows constitutional and institutional roots from the constitutional design of a parliamentary system of government, the executive shall be drawn from the House of the People and shall be collectively responsible to it, placing procedure at its centre, not as a mere technical act of rules, but Articles 74 and 75 provide for a Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister to aid and advise the President and to remain collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha, while Article 79 establishes Parliament to consist of the President, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the latter establishing a bicameral structure where the Lok Sabha represents the people by direct election and the Rajya Sabha represents the states and Union Territories, the Vice President is ex officio Chairman of the Upper House and the Speaker, the principal guardian of order, admissibility, discipline and certification in legislative proceedings in the Lower House of Parliament (The Constitution of India, 2022; Digital Sansad, n.d.-a, n.d.-b), further, the President plays an integral part in the legislative process, summoning and proroguing Parliament, addressing it, assenting to bills under Article 111 and promulgating ordinances under Article 123 when Parliament is not in session, constitutional provisions separately structure legislative procedure through Articles 107 to 111, joint sittings under Article 108, special provisions for Money Bills under Articles 109 and 110 and financial business through Articles 112 to 117 (The Constitution of India, 2022), constitutionally linking procedure to budgetary control and democratic accountability, even as Articles 105 and 122 protect parliamentary privileges and shield internal proceedings to judicial challenge on procedural irregularity and procedural framework, reinforcing parliamentary autonomy within constitutional limits (The Constitution of India, 2022), whereas these provisions operate in practice through Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business, Speaker's directions, Chairman's rulings, conventions, and precedent determining as to how questions are admitted, bills are scheduled, debates are structured, and committees function, making parliamentary procedure in India a normative and political instrument of translating constitutional governance into daily legislative practice, a reality made more salient in the contemporary period where 17th Lok Sabha completed only 274 sittings, among the fewest for a full-term Lok Sabha, showing how the constitutional promise of deliberative government is dependent upon not merely formal design but institutional usage, precedent, and procedural commitment (Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure, 2019; Directions by the Speaker, 2019; PRS Legislative Research, 2024).

Core Parliamentary Procedures and Institutional Practices

Core parliamentary procedures and institutional practices in India operate as follows: the legislative process, while definable in the interlocking constitutional provisions (Articles 107 to 111 of the Constitution), including the stages of introduction of government or private members' bills, first reading, second reading, committee stage, consideration, and third reading, and ultimately passage by both Houses followed by presentation to the President for assent and enactment, in actuality shows a marked variation in the amount of debate and scrutiny involved, with the 17th Lok Sabha passing 58% of bills within a two-week period of introduction, with 35% of bills in Lok Sabha and 34% in Rajya Sabha passing with less than an hour of discussion each, indicating a co-existence of formal stages and compressed deliberation (PRS Legislative Research, 2024a, 2024b; The Constitution of India, 2022); Parliament's deliberative devices, defined as including the Question Hour, Zero Hour, short duration discussions, calling attention motions, adjournment motions, no-confidence motions, half-an-hour discussions, and special mentions, designed to secure ministerial accountability and enabling members to raise urgent public issues, show that their cumulatively substantial accountability potential are constrained by party coordination, time allocation, and other departures from pro forma usage, with Question Hour in the 17th Lok Sabha functioning for only 60% of the scheduled time (PRS Legislative Research, 2024a; Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 2013; Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2019), while Parliament's financial procedures, institutionalised through the PT procedures of budget presentation, demands for grants, cut motions, appropriation bills and finance bills, indicate the constitutional core of fiscal control with consistent tensions, as overcome time constraints and formality through guillotine processes often dilute in-depth discussion, with the committee system, especially the Department-related Standing Committees, Public Accounts Committee, Estimates Committee, and Committee on Public Undertakings, remaining central to legislative scrutiny and post-facto accountability, although only 16% of bills were referred to committees in the 17th Lok Sabha (PRS Legislative Research, 2024a; Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2019) and through this structure a multiplicity of authorities, from the Speaker and Chairman who exercise powers to maintain order, determine admissibility and certify Money Bills, to the deflection framework which significantly shapes voting behaviour through the whip system and party discipline, and often constrains individual autonomy, suggests an interdependent and political institutional environment in which the formal exercise of parliamentary powers in India is conditioned by the formal design and party realities assisting the attainment of deliberation, and accountability for scrutinized decisions.

Reform Trajectories in the 21st Century

The trajectories of parliamentary reform in India in the 21st century can be understood across interlinked domains of efficiency-focused procedural reform, accountability promoting reforms, institutional modernization, and commission driven proposals (or recommendations), although their democratic benefits are uneven, because efficiency reforms have increasingly been directed at tighter time management of legislative business, agenda rationalization, shorter debates, and fast-track mechanisms designed to accelerate the passage of Bills through Parliament, yet the recent record suggests the tension in this approach as 58% of all bills were passed by the 17th Lok Sabha within two weeks of being introduced, and one-third of all bills were passed in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with less than one hour of discussion, indicating that procedural speed may enhance throughput at the expense of deliberative scrutiny, accountability-oriented reforms have focused on delivering stronger committees, enhanced ministerial responsiveness, transparency, and broader public access to proceedings, though committee-based scrutiny has declined in practice, with only 16% of bills in the 17th Lok Sabha referred for detailed consideration to committees, despite repeated academic and institutional acknowledgment that committees are central to effective law-making and executive oversight, and in addition, institutional modernization has progressed significantly through digitization and e-Parliament initiatives, including but not limited to paperless workflows, digital notices, online records, mobile access to parliamentary documents, and technology enabled systems such as NeVA 2.0, the NeVA Mobile App 2.0, the Subordinate Legislation Management System, and the Consultative Committee Management System, all launched or upgraded to augment efficiency, transparency, accessibility, as well as legislative support for members and parliamentary institutions, while longer-term reform thinking has also drawn from the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, which was tasked explicitly with examining how the Constitution could be enabled to meet the requirements of "efficient, smooth and effective" governance within parliamentary democracy; and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, whose reports on ethics, e-governance, and institutional reform still provides conceptual frameworks for recommendations for enhanced scrutiny, improved conduct, and better functioning of institutions, yet the anti-formalism, limits of reform remain striking, as procedural change without a corresponding change in behaviour can only yield symbolic modernization, as executive control of the legislative timetable, shrinking opposition space, and the substitution of technological modernization for substantive deliberative empowerment continue to undermine the transformative promise of parliamentary reform in contemporary India.

Major Challenges in Contemporary Parliamentary Procedure

Because frequent disruptions and adjournments have repeatedly reduced the effective time available for discussion and oversight, while the broader quality of debate has declined as legislative business is increasingly compressed, with the 17th Lok Sabha holding only 274 sittings, the fewest among full-term Lok Sabhas, and 58% of bills being passed within two weeks of introduction, including 35% of bills in Lok Sabha and 34% in Rajya Sabha passed with less than one hour of discussion, indicating a shift from deliberative scrutiny toward expedited decision-making (PRS Legislative Research, 2024a, 2024b), and this compression is compounded by the limited time available for private members' business, which by established parliamentary practice is largely confined to a short Friday slot, thereby restricting opportunities for non-government legislative initiative and independent agenda-setting by ordinary members (Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, n.d.), while financial scrutiny has also weakened in practice because detailed discussion on demands for grants is often curtailed and completed through guillotining, diminishing Parliament's classic power of the purse, and the recurring reliance on the ordinance route under Article 123 further reflects the possibility of executive bypass when ordinary legislative deliberation is avoided or deferred (The Constitution of India, 2022), even as majoritarian decision-making, reinforced by strong party whips, reduces the autonomy of individual legislators in debate and voting and limits the scope for conscience-based or constituency-sensitive intervention, thereby transforming Parliament from a forum of persuasion into one of numerical control, and concerns about the neutrality of the presiding officer acquire special salience in this environment because the Speaker's powers over admissibility, order, certification, and anti-defection decisions are constitutionally significant yet exercised within a highly polarized party system, while committee-based scrutiny, though institutionally vital, has become less central, with only 16% of bills in the 17th Lok Sabha referred to committees, and taken together these trends reveal a deepening tension between procedural speed and democratic deliberation in which institutional form survives but its representative, supervisory, and discussion-based substance is increasingly strained by political centralization and executive control over the parliamentary timetable.

Discussion related to the study

Underlying these findings on India's Parliament is a historical institutionalist and deliberative conception of empirical evidence whereby this institution has have experienced significant procedural adaptation in form, but not always democratic deepening in substance since historical institutionalism reveals the extent to which rules and conventions can be incrementally reinstated under new political conditions, and deliberative theory emphasizes that the democratic value of the parliamentary procedure cannot consist merely in passing legislation but in reasoned debate with opposition participation and public justification, scrutiny of executive action, and other core democratic goods, yet the record of the 17th Lok Sabha shows a pattern in which Parliament functioned for 88% of scheduled time but had

only 274 sittings, the least among full-term Lok Sabhas while only 16% of bills were referred to committees and 58% were passed taking less than two weeks to introduce to passage (PRS Legislative Research, 2022a), indicating that procedural throughput has advanced at the expense of deliberative depth and committee-based examination, which in turn has direct implications for representation, as this party-centred control of agenda and limited discussion of private members' business stifles the ability of individual MPs articulate constituency interests; for deliberation, since the compression of debates constrains reason-giving, contestation and free debate; for accountability, because of fewer mentions in committees and limited opportunities for questioning; and for legislative quality as bills passed rapidly and with limited examination face a greater risk of inadequate scrutiny and defect state and policy design; and thus when parliamentary procedural adaptation is contrasted with democratic outcomes, the evidence suggests that rather than a simple narrative of parliamentary decline or ambitious reform success, a complex transformation has occurred whereby the efficiency, centralization, and modernization of Parliament embodied in contemporary reforms can be seen to have increased the capacity of the state to pass legislation while simultaneously straining Parliament's representative and supervisory functions, confirming that while a moderate reform effort has succeeded in upgrading institutional management, parliamentary democracy in the fuller normative sense of democratic legitimacy, deliberative inclusion, and accountable law-making remains a remit still only partially extended.

Conclusion

Overall, while Parliament appears to have adopted significant reforms in the areas of workflow, transparency, and other digitally-enabled support (the move to the new Parliament building in September 2023, and ongoing incremental success levels for a paperless and technology-enabled Legislative Assembly platform such as NeVA recognized for success in 20 state legislatures, and by October 2025, its incremental progress on paperless modernization continues), these successes in procedural modernization have not fully resolved deeper structural problems of executive predominance, compressed deliberation, and weakened scrutiny and oversight, with the experience of the 17th Lok Sabha constituting only 274 sittings (the fewest among full-term Lok Sabhas), 11 of its 15 sessions adjourned early, 40 scheduled sittings lost, 58% of bills passed within two weeks of introduction, 60% of Question Hour time functioned, and the annual budget discussed for an average of only 35 hours, and about 80% of the budget passed without discussion on average between 2019 and 2023, suggesting too frequently an instance of efficiency outpacing deliberative depth and accountability thus reflecting a dual process of institutional modernization and democratic strain. So, the key takeaway is that while procedural reforms assuaged certain institutional management, transparency, and responsiveness issues in India, this has not yet led to a corresponding democratic deepening in substance, especially with regard to opposition space, review through committees, financial control, and the relative autonomy of Parliament vis-à-vis executive. In short, for Indian democracy this means that the vitality of parliamentary government [End Page 494] is contingent not only on speedier legislative clearance or digital technological advancement but also on the continuing status of Parliament as a constitutional deliberative and oversight institution, whereas for political science scholarship the Indian case illustrates that democratic backsliding can take place even in the context of institutional adaptation when wider accountability is not transparently complemented by behavioral and normative commitment to formal reform. To that end, a sustainable parliamentary future in India needs a guaranteed minimum number of days, stronger and regular committee referral of bills, fuller protection of question hour and budget discussion, greater neutrality and institutional independence of presiding offices, and procedural safeguards that rebalance speed with efficient legislative examination and accountability.

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